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## PART—I

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# The Future of Democracy.

BY

D. N. BANERJEE.

*Reader and Head of the Department of Economics & Politics.  
(University of Dacca.)*

## I

### Introduction.

It looks, indeed, like a curious coincidence that the Indian Philosophical Congress should choose "The Future of Democracy" as the subject for its symposium for the year of the centenary<sup>1</sup> of the publication of the first two volumes of the great work, *Democracy in America*, by Alexis De Tocqueville. As we shall have occasions to see later on, there are many observations in this monumental work, based upon a careful personal examination of the political institutions of the American people, which are of interest even today to every student of democracy.

Before I proceed further, I should like to take this opportunity of thanking the Philosophical Congress for inviting me to take part in this year's symposium. I must state, however, that it will not be possible for me to deal with the subject exhaustively as the space at my disposal is very limited. Nor do I think I shall be able to make any original contribution to the discussion of a subject the literature of which is so vast.

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1. See the *Introductory Notice* by the Translator Mr Henry Reeve, in *Democracy in America*, Vol 1, Edn. 1875 (Longmans, Green & Co.)



## II

**The Meaning of Democracy.**

What is democracy? The term has been variously defined. It has been used to denote sometimes a form of government, sometimes a form of state, sometimes a form of society, and sometimes again, a combination of all three.<sup>2</sup> In the course of his famous speech on the field of Gettysburg on November 19th, 1863, Abraham Lincoln described it as the "Government of the people, by the people, and for the people".<sup>2a</sup> According to Lord Bryce, it "really means nothing more nor less than the rule of the whole people expressing their sovereign will by their votes".<sup>3</sup> Without multiplying definitions, however, I may say that, for my present purposes, and from the point of view of my arguments, I shall use the term democracy to denote a form of state. Whatever may be the form of its government, I shall be prepared to call a state a democratic state if the effective political power in it is ultimately in the hands of its people. This is also the view of Rousseau. He says that he will call any state a republic "which is governed by laws, under whatever form of administration it may be".<sup>4</sup> Prof. Hearnshaw is therefore quite correct when he says that democracy as a form of state is consistent with any type of government—democratic, aristocratic, or monarchic, and that a democratic state is simply one in which the community-as-a-whole possesses sovereign authority, maintains ultimate control over affairs, and determines what sort of governmental machinery should be set up<sup>5</sup>.

2. See Hearnshaw, *Democracy at the Crossways*, ch. 1.

2a. See Charnwood, Abraham Lincoln, p. 361.

3. *The Modern Democracies*, Vol. I, Preface, p. VIII.

4. See Tozer's Translation of Rousseau's *Social Contract*, p. 132.

5. See *Democracy at the Crossways*, pp. 16-17.

## III

**The Future of Democracy.**

I am not a prophet. Nor am I imprisoned in dogmas. I cannot therefore definitely and dogmatically predict what would happen in the future. All that I can do is to indicate what is likely to happen from inherent principles of human nature or from the essential nature of things. For instance, if it can be shown that democracy is more conducive to the enrichment of individual human personality, that it ensures a higher measure of human dignity, and that on the whole it tends more to promote what Wilhelm Von Humboldt has characterised<sup>6</sup> as "human development in its richest diversity", than any other form of state, then we shall certainly be justified in being optimistic about its future and even in entertaining the hope that, with the progress of civilization and the spread of liberal ideas, consequent upon the diffusion of education, the democratic state will gradually replace everywhere what has been conveniently described as the authoritarian form of political organization.

I do not despair of the future of democracy because it has certain positive and pre-eminent virtues which make it 'inherently superior to all other forms of state whatsoever.' Jeremy Bentham has stated in his *Constitutional Code*<sup>7</sup> that "the right and proper end of government in every political community, is the greatest happiness of all the individuals of which it is composed, say, in other words, the greatest happiness of the greatest number." This he calls the greatest-happiness principle. "The actual end of government," however, he continues, "is, in every political community, the greatest happiness of those, whether one or many, by

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6. In his *Sphere and Duties of Government*.

7. See Bentham's Works (Bowring's edition), Vol. ix, p. 5.

whom the powers of government are exercised." Its proof is furnished by the history of all nations. And this, he says, is natural, self-regarding interest being predominant over all other interests put together. By this principle of self-preference, or as a result of this propensity in human nature, every human being, writes the philosopher, "is led to pursue that line of conduct which.....will be in the highest degree contributory to his own greatest happiness, whatsoever be the effect of it, in relation to the happiness of other similar beings, any or all of them taken together." Monarchy or oligarchy is not consistent with the greatest good of the greatest number. Hence the whole problem of good government is to produce a coincidence of the two ends—the greatest happiness of the greatest number and the greatest happiness of the governors—by securing an identity of interest between the governors and the governed. This is possible only in a democracy. Direct democracy being physically impossible in these days of large and numerous states, he recommends representative democracy in which administration will be carried on by the majority of representatives duly elected by the people.

Bentham's disciple, James Mill, also accepts this view. He strongly commends the 'grand discovery of modern times,' namely, the representative system, as the only safeguard against the abuse of power inevitable in a monarchy or an oligarchy. "It would be a 'contradiction in terms' to suppose that the community at large 'can have an interest opposite to its interest.' " According to the Benthamite formula it can have no 'sinister interest.'<sup>8</sup>

Thomas Paine, another great champion of democracy, agrees in essence with the above view. "What is called a *Republic*," writes Paine,<sup>9</sup> "is not any *particular form* of

8. See Leslie Stephen, *English Utilitarians*, Vol. II, Ch.

9. See "Rights of Man", Part II, Chap. 3.

Government. It is wholly characteristic of the purport, matter or object for which Government ought to be instituted, and on which it is to be employed *Res-publica*, the public affairs, or the public good ; or, literally translated, the *public thing*.....in this sense it is naturally opposed to the word monarchy, which has a base original signification. It means arbitrary power in an individual person ; in the exercise of which, *himself*, and not the *res-publica*, is the object."

As to the aristocratical form, he continues, 'it has the same vices and defects with the monarchical, except that the chance of abilities is better from the proportion of numbers, but there is still no security for the right use and application of them.'

De Tocqueville also came to the same conclusion as Bentham, after carefully examining the self-governing institutions of the American people. "No political form," wrote the French philosopher, 'has hitherto been discovered which is equally favourable to the prosperity and the development of all the classes into which society is divided. These classes continue to form, as it were, a certain number of distinct nations in the same nation.....The advantage of democracy does not consist .....in favouring the prosperity of all, but simply in contributing to the *well-being of the greatest possible number*.'"<sup>10</sup>

Further, in his famous work, *Social Statics*,<sup>11</sup> Herbert Spencer has deduced the same conclusion from the law of equal freedom for all and from what he describes as a tolerably well-ascertained fact that men are still selfish and that, directly or indirectly, either by hook or by crook, if not

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10. *Democracy in America* (Reeve's Translation), 1875, Vol. I p. 241 42.

11. See Chap. xx.

openly, then in secret, they will promote their private ends. According to him, 'a purely democratic government is the only one which is morally admissible—is the only one that is not intrinsically criminal.' Moreover, 'if class-legislation is the *inevitable* consequence of class-power, there is' writes Spencer, 'no escape from the conclusion that the interest of the *whole* society can be secured, only by giving power into the hands of the *whole* people.'

Referring, in this connexion, to the possibility of the tyranny over the rich 'minority' by the poor 'majority', he says that, 'surely', if one of the two parties must submit to injustice, it ought to be the rich hundreds, and not the poor thousands.'

Finally, I may mention here that another great thinker, namely, John Stuart Mill, has also come to the conclusion, from various considerations to which I shall refer later on, that the ideally best form of government is representative government. Referring to the common saying that if a good despot could be ensured, despotic monarchy would be the best form of government, he has said<sup>12</sup> that he looks upon this as a radical and most pernicious misconception of what good government is, and that, until it can be got rid of, it will fatally vitiate all our speculations on government.

If I have quoted above the views of Bentham, James Mill, Thomas Paine, De Tocqueville, Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill, it is because I agree substantially with their points of view. They have taught in effect that if popular well-being, to quote the words of Professor Laski,<sup>13</sup> is to be the purpose of government, popular control is the essential condition of its fulfilment. I feel along with them that it is only in a democracy that the interest of the common man will

12. See *Representative Government*, Ch. III.

13. See his *Dangers of Obedience & other Essays*, p. 209.

be adequately protected. I also maintain along with them that it is only in a democracy that his dignity and self-respect as a human being will be duly respected, that he will have an *equal opportunity* with others of rising to the full stature of his manhood and realising his true self, and that his station in life will not be determined by the accident of his birth but by his worth as a man. Professor Laski is therefore perfectly right when he says:<sup>14</sup> "whatever is to be said against the democratic form of state, it seems to me unquestionable that it has forced the needs of humble men on the attention of government in a way impossible under any other form." We must not forget that he who is excluded from power for no fault of his, is sure to be excluded from privilege. This is natural.

What I have stated before, directly or indirectly, in reference to a monarchy, aristocracy, or an oligarchy, applies equally well, if not more, to a despotism or dictatorship. Prince Bismarck is reported to have said<sup>15</sup> that 'after all, a benevolent rational absolutism is the best form of government'. I am prepared to accept the proposition for meeting a temporary emergency when a "recoil from freedom", as a writer has beautifully put it, may perhaps be expedient in the interest of the state. Even Rousseau<sup>16</sup> has admitted the occasional necessity of dictatorship when the safety of a state is at stake. And even the Roman Republic would appoint a dictator in times of great crisis. Rousseau has insisted, however, that it is important to fix the duration of the dictatorship at a very short term which must never be prolonged. John Stuart Mill also is not opposed, in cases of extreme exigency, to "the assumption of absolute power in the form

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14 See Laski, *Liberty in the Modern State*, p 38

15 See Mathew Arnold, *Mixed Essays*, 2nd Edn., Preface, pp. VII-VIII.

16 See *The Contract Social*, Book IV, Ch. VI.

of a temporary dictatorship".<sup>17</sup> He looks upon it as a necessary medicine for diseases of the body politic which cannot be got rid of by less violent means. But a medicine cannot be the daily food for a healthy person without destroying his vitality and his natural power of resistance. Its application must be stopped as soon as the patient is cured. This should also be the case with dictatorship in a body politic. I, therefore, look upon the post-War Dictatorships in some countries today without any misgiving whatsoever about the future of democracy. They are purely temporary phenomena—passing ebullitions—due to the Great War and to post-War economic and political factors. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that, in most of the countries where democracy appears to have completely broken down for the time being, free institutions had, as Sir Herbert Samuel has rightly pointed out,<sup>18</sup> never taken root. But what has happened in Great Britain and the United States of America in recent years has been "a vindication, not a surrender, of democracy". Nor has democracy broken down in France and many other countries in spite of the War and its consequences.

As a permanent arrangement, Bismarck's thesis is quite unacceptable. Apart from the difficulty of ensuring a succession of *benevolent, rational* despots, there is one, as Mathew Arnold has shown,<sup>19</sup> fatal objection to it, namely, "that it is against nature, that it contradicts a vital instinct in man—the instinct of expansion." This instinct of expansion manifests itself in the love of liberty and the love of equality. And man cannot be "civilised or humanised by thwarting his vital instincts."

Besides, there is another very serious objection to 'benevo-

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17. See *Representative Government*, Chap. III

18. See his article entitled "Will Democracy Survive" in the *Contemporary Review* (February, 1934.)

19. See his *Mixed Essays*, Preface, p. VIII.

lent rational absolutism? It produces a most demoralising effect upon the governed. 'A good despotism,' observed<sup>20</sup>

John Stuart Mill, 'is an altogether false ideal, which practically (except as a means to some temporary purpose) becomes the most senseless and dangerous of chimeras. Evil for evil, a good despotism in a country at all advanced in civilisation, is more noxious than a bad one, for it is far more relaxing and enervating to the thoughts, feelings, and energies of the people. The despotism of Augustus prepared the Romans for Tiberius.'

The personality of man in a state governed despotically is dwarfed, and he fast deteriorates morally. The basis of autocracy or despotism is force which should never be the foundation, as T. H. Green has stated,<sup>21</sup> of any rational form of political organization. Force benumbs our faculties, deadens our spirit of enterprize and dulls our intelligence. Freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of the Press would be impossible in a regime based upon force. The obedience to law in such a regime will not be based upon any moral conviction on the part of the citizen but upon physical coercion on the part of the ruler. As Professor Hearnshaw has nicely put it,<sup>22</sup> comparing dictatorship with democracy, 'while democracy stands for the force of argument, dictatorship stands for the argument of force; the appeal of democracy is to reason, but the appeal of dictatorship is to irrational violence; democracy is based on freedom, but dictatorship on subjection; democracy counts heads, while dictatorship breaks them.' Mill has laid, in his classic essay on Representative Government,<sup>23</sup> a special emphasis on the

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20. See *Representative Government*, Ch. III.

21. See his *Principles of Political Obligation*.

22. See his article on "Democracy or Dictatorship" in the *Contemporary Review* for October, 1934.

23. *Representative Government*, Ch. III.



invigorating effect of freedom upon character and, in particular, on the moral part of the instruction afforded by the participation of the private citizen, if even rarely, in public functions. "Where," he writes, "this school of public spirit does not exist, scarcely any sense is entertained that private persons, in no eminent social situation, owe any duties to society, except to obey the laws and submit to the government. There is no unselfish sentiment of identification with the public. Every thought or feeling, either of interest or of duty, is absorbed in the individual and in the family." And even if it were possible to have a good, all-seeing despot, what would, he asks, be the effect? "One man of super-human mental activity managing the entire affairs of a mentally passive people." "Nor is it only in their intelligence that they suffer. Their moral capacities are equally stunted . . . . . The food of feeling is action . . . . . Let a person have nothing to do for his country, and he will not care for it." Indeed, there is a good deal of truth in the saying that in a despotism there is at most but one patriot, the despot himself! It is rather significant that the last Great War was won by countries governed democratically.

De Tocqueville also had come to the same conclusion as Mill, from his study of the American political institutions. He had observed:<sup>24</sup>

"I maintain that the most powerful, and perhaps the only, means of interesting men in the welfare of their country which we still possess is to make them partakers in the Government . . . . In the United States . . . everyone takes as zealous an interest in the affairs of his township, his county and of the whole State, as if they were his own, because everyone, in his sphere, takes an active part in the government of society."

24. See *Democracy in America* (Feeve's Translation), 1875, p. 246.

Again :—<sup>25</sup>

“Democracy does not confer the most skilful kind of government upon the people, but it produces that which the most skilful governments are frequently unable to awaken, namely, an all-pervading and restless activity, a superabundant force, and an energy which is inseparable from it, and which may, under favourable circumstances, beget the most amazing benefits. These are the true advantages of democracy.”

Truth therefore lies not in the thesis of Prince Bismark to which I have already referred, but in the dictum of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman that good government is no substitute for self-government.

What has been said above about monarchy, absolutism, autocracy, or dictatorship, is more or less true of aristocracy or oligarchy, so far as the masses of men in a country are concerned. Sir Henry Maine has argued in his *Popular Government* that the progress of mankind has hitherto been effected by the rise and fall of aristocracies, by the formation of one aristocracy within another, or by the succession of one aristocracy to another. And he approvingly quotes the saying of Strauss that History is a sound aristocrat. Referring in this connexion to the case of Athens, he says that the shortlived Athenian democracy under whose shelter art, science, and philosophy shot so wonderfully upwards, was only an aristocracy which had risen on the ruins of one much narrower. By this argument Maine only indirectly supports my position that in an aristocracy or an oligarchy a particular privileged class prospers at the cost of the vast unprivileged multitude. Did not Athens contain a large population of slaves? Were these slaves not regarded as mere living instruments of labour without any civic rights? Could there be any rights of man as man, any regard for the sanctity of

human life as such in these circumstances? I am reminded in this connexion what De Tocqueville said<sup>26</sup> on this very question, while explaining the object of his great work on America. Among other things, he said :—

"To those for whom the word 'democracy' is synonymous with disturbance, anarchy, spoliation, and murder, I have attempted to show that the government of democracy may be reconciled with respect for property, with deference for rights, with safety to freedom, with reverence to religion ; that if democratic government is less favourable than another to some of the finer parts of human nature, it has also great and noble elements ; and *that perhaps, after all, it is the will of God to shed a lesser grade of happiness on the totality of mankind, not to combine a greater share of it on a smaller number, or to raise the few to the verge of perfection.*"<sup>27</sup> "There cannot be a combination of circumstances more dangerous to human welfare," says Mill in his *Principles of Political Economy*, "than that in which intelligence and talent are maintained at a high standard within a governing corporation, but starved and discouraged outside the pile." "Such a system, more completely than any other, embodies the idea of despotism, by arming with intellectual superiority as an additional weapon, those who have already the legal power. It approaches as nearly as the organic difference between human beings and other animals admits, to the government of sheep by their shepherd, without anything like so strong an interest as the shepherd has in the thriving condition of the flock."<sup>27A</sup> This is what does not really happen in a true democracy. Its ideal is inconsistent with any kind of privilege or inequality which is not justified either by worth or service to community. Colonel

26. See *Democracy in America* (Reeve's Translation), Introductory Notice, pp. IX-X.

27. The italics are mine.

27A See Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, Book V, Ch. XI, sec. 6, pp. 572-73 (Edn. 1891, Longmans).

Rainboro,<sup>28</sup> speaking on behalf of the army to Cromwell and Ireton in a debate held on the 25th (?) of October, 1647, expressed this ideal beautifully when he said : .<sup>29</sup> "Really I think the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as the richest he." In essence, similar was the sentiment of Abraham Lincoln when he observed<sup>30</sup> "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this to the extent of the difference, is no democracy."

I have so far considered the case for democracy principally from the point of view of human personality, since personality, as Professor Dewey<sup>31</sup> has observed "is the one thing of permanent and abiding worth" and since "in every human individual there lies personality." Nor should we ignore that "in every individual, there lives," to quote Professor Dewey again, "an infinite and universal possibility—that of being a king and a priest." If, however, we consider the question from the point of view of the material well-being of the masses, the case for democracy is equally strong. So far democracies have been mainly organized in societies based on the capitalistic system. Nevertheless, they have done much to improve the lot of the average man. Much, however, yet remains to be done. The gulf between the rich and the poor is still very wide and there is still going on exploitation of the latter by the former. This is certainly not conducive to peace and harmony. Professor Laski<sup>32</sup> is therefore, right when he says that 'in a society of

28. Also spelt Rainsborough or Rainborowe - See *Cromwell's Army* by C. H. Firth (Methuen).

29. I am indebted to Professor Lindsay for this information. See his *Essentials of Democracy*, pp. 12-13.

30. See Charnwood, *Abraham Lincoln*, p. 453.

31. Originally quoted by Professor Hearnshaw in his "*Democracy at the Crossways*" (p. 35).

32. See his *Liberty in the Modern State*, p. 195.

of economic unequals, gross inequalities make conflict inherent in its foundations', and that 'the factor of consent is not likely effectively to operate in any society where there is a serious inequality of economic condition.'<sup>33</sup> I believe, however, that it will be much easier for a democratic state to bring about a better distribution of wealth and to put a stop to the dehumanising process of the existing system than for any other form of state.

Nor, again, is democracy a menace to internationalism. It is rather greatly conducive to its growth. As T. H. Green has shown in his *Principles of Political Obligation*,<sup>34</sup> more wars have been caused by the rival ambition of kings and dynasties for territorial aggrandisement and by the selfish interests of the privileged classes in society than by anything else. Space forbids me, however, to deal with this question in detail.

Thus, considered from every point of view, the future of democracy is assured. With the advance of human civilization it is bound to spread. It is the only form of political organization which is compatible with the true progress of humanity. Any inclination to accept any other form of state will, to quote the words used by Mary Agnes Hamilton in a slightly different connexion,<sup>35</sup> indicate "poverty of spirit, inertia of mind, and a contemptible weakness of will and desire" In democracy alone the average man can hope for the betterment of his lot. As Lord Bryce has said<sup>36</sup> "individual liberty has a better chance—even if not a complete security—with the people than with a class. There is less room for the insolence of power. The sense of civic duty and the sense of human as well as civic sympathy are more likely to flourish. Government is more just and humane, not because it is wiser, for wisdom does not

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33. Ibid, p. 214.

34. Chapter K.

35. *John Stuart Mill*, p. 62

36. *Modern Democracies*, Vol. II, p. 593.

increase with numbers, but because the aim and purpose of popular government is the common good of all. An enlightened monarch, or even a generous and prudently observant aristocracy may from time to time honestly strive to help and raise the masses, but whenever power rests with a man or a class, a scornful selfishness sooner or later creeps back and depraves the conduct of affairs. So long as democracy holds fast to the principle that it exists for the whole people and makes its officials truly responsible to the whole people it will deserve to prevail."

If I have praised democracy, it is because of its intrinsic superiority as compared with other forms of state. I am not, however, blind to its defects. Most of those defects are remediable and many of them would disappear with the spread of education and the growth of the sense of civic duty. But it must also be said that some of the charges levelled against democracy are without any foundation and that others are grossly exaggerated. While recognizing its defects—and no human institution can be absolutely free from defects—we must not ignore the fact that it promotes, as Mill has shown<sup>37</sup> a better and higher form of national character than any other polity whatsoever. This is its greatest recommendation. Moreover, as a recent writer has rightly stated,<sup>38</sup> democratic representative institutions, with all their blemishes, seem alone in this, that they hold the means as well as the impulse of self-repair. "Only a complete cynic," he continues, "will suppose that this, though true of parliaments past, is no longer true. And only a complete disregard for history will suggest that a like tendency to self-repair resides in despotism or dictatorship."

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37. See *Representative Government*, Ch. III.

38. Prof. H. L. Stewart in his article in the *Hibbert Journal* for April, 1935. The article is entitled 'Can Parliamentary Government endure?'

## IV.

**Conclusion.**

In conclusion, I should like to say that I cannot do better than end this paper with the following memorable passage from Mill's classic essay on Liberty :—

"The worth of a State, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it; and a State which postpones the interests of *their* mental expansion and elevation to a little more of administrative skill, or of that semblance of it which practice gives, in the details of business; a State which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes—will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished; and that the perfection of machinery to which it has sacrificed everything will in the end avail it nothing, for want of the vital power which, in order that the machine might work more smoothly, it has preferred to banish."

Democracy promotes this mental expansion and elevation of the average citizen more than any other form of State. Hence it has to my mind a bright future before it in spite of all that has happened in recent years.

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# **The Future of Democracy.**

By

**V. SHIVA RAM and E. ASIRVATHAM.**

*(Department of Political Science, Lucknow University.)*

I. *Democracy under Revision.* H. G. Wells describes the present age as the Age of Democracy under Revision. The age which has drawn to its close under our very eyes he describes as the Age of Democracy Ascendant. It is a commonplace observation that people today are not as hopeful of democracy as they were in previous generations. Their attitude is one of caution or criticism. The World War, in the words of Woodrow Wilson, was fought to make the world "a safe place for democracy." But the problem which has confronted us since then is how to make democracy safe for the world. The years succeeding the War have shown clearly that democracy is not an "open sesame" to peace, prosperity and progress. In the multitude of voices we do not necessarily find wisdom. The extension of the franchise to the largest possible number of men and women is not synonymous with civil and political liberty. We no longer hope with Bentham that we can radically improve "this wicked world by covering it over with Republics." We are more sober now, if not altogether disillusioned. Ludovici expresses the profound discontent of the present generation with democracy when he asks the rhetorical question, "who believes in democracy now-a-days? Who believes in parliamentary government, in the brotherhood of men or in universal suffrage?" He would readily agree with Alcibiades in regarding democracy as "acknowledged madness."

Democracy is being attacked today from various angles,



both by reactionaries and revolutionaries. It is attacked with much vehemence by believers in autocracy and dictatorship. Many of these advocate the gospel of direct action, according to which a well-organised, strong-willed, and assertive minority should impose its will upon the helpless majority by remorseless terrorism, if necessary. The philosophy of direct action as expressed by Oliver Cromwell, in a different context, is "What's for their good, not what pleases them—that's the question." The principal arguments used by believers in direct action, as stated by Hearnshaw, are (1) Parliament does not adequately represent labour, (2) Political methods are not suited to the settlement of industrial questions. (3) Direct action is more prompt and effective than political action. (4) Minorities are usually right and the majorities are wrong. Therefore, majorities should be disregarded and coerced for their own good. Direct action, in one of its phases, means the unreserved use of industrial power. "It is a clear assertion of the antagonistic principle of oligarchy, and ultimately of despotism."

H. G. Wells is convinced that since the War there has been a growing distrust and discontent with the politicians and the political method evolved by parliamentary democracy. The magic, he says, has gone out of the method of government by general elections and "democracy is entering upon a phase of revision in which parliaments and parliamentary bodies and political life as we know it today are destined to disappear." The root of the trouble Wells finds in the indifference, ignorance, and incapacity of the common man towards public affairs. The ordinary voter, he believes, does not care a rap for his vote.

In the face of all these criticisms, it is foolish to assume naively that democracy has an assured future before it and that it will prove to be the panacea for all our social and political ills. It may be safely said that unless we can remedy the defects of democracy which are coming more and more

to the forefront, democracy will have to give place to some other form of political organisation.

II. *The meaning of Democracy.* Democracy is not a mere form of government. It is a type of state, an order of society, an industrial condition, as well as a moral and spiritual principle. Many of those who criticise democracy criticise it merely as a form of government. This is a mistake. Unless we interpret democracy in the five-fold sense indicated above, we shall not be doing full justice to it.

Democracy, in its narrow sense, means rule by the Many. Bryce uses the term to denote "a government in which the will of the majority of qualified citizens to constitute the great bulk of the inhabitants, say, roughly at least three fourths, so that the physical force of the citizens coincides (broadly speaking) with their voting power."

In its broader sense, democracy is "a political status," "an ethical concept" and "a social condition." It means faith in the common man. Or, as A. D. Lindsay states it, it implies that all beings have worth in themselves. No one is a mere means to another's end. The well-known formula of Kant in this connection is "so act as to treat humanity whether in your own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end and never merely as a means." In the words of a seventeenth century English writer, not so well known, "The poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as the richest he."

The value of personality which is the crux of democracy does not mean that all individuals are alike or equal. Democracy admits the fact that nature has not endowed all men alike. What it seeks to do is to reconcile the principle or sentiment of equality with the fact of natural inequality. It attempts to bring into existence "a social machinery which would make for the enrichment and expression of personality." "Democracy in practice," says Burns, "is the hypothesis that

all men are equal, which is used in order to discover who are the best.'

Viewed in this manner, democracy is religious principle and the democratic way of life is the genuinely religious way of life. Democracy we believe, is a practical manifestation of the enthusiasm for humanity. It is a concrete attempt at the reconciliation of the apparently contradictory principles of liberty, equality and fraternity in order that every individual in the community may be enabled to attain the highest good possible for him.

### *III. The case for and against Democracy.*

Democracy gives us a guarantee that the will of every one in the community shall be duly considered and that no one shall be neglected in what is done by the government. In the words of President Lowell, "In a complete democracy no one can complain that he has not a chance to be heard." What good government requires is a close cooperation or working alliance between the specialist and the layman, and democracy best fulfils this condition.

Democracy, further, is a large scale experiment in public education. It stimulates interest and is informative. It tends to create a higher type of mentality among the people whom it governs. It ennobles the people. It rests on the principle that what a man earns for himself by his own effort is of much greater value to him than what is handed down to him by some one else. It is the best aid to initiative, self-help, and the cultivation of individual responsibility. The supreme merit of democracy, says J. S. Mill, lies in the fact that "it promotes a better and higher form of national character than any other polity whatever."

Furthermore, democracy promotes patriotism. Being government by persuasion, it reduces the danger of revolution. It makes both order and progress easily possible. It is the best expression of the general will of the people.

Whatever truth these arguments may have in theory, in practice democracy is open to several criticisms. Not infrequently does it mean rule by the irresponsible multitude. Votes are counted and not weighed. Undue importance is attached to quantity, rather than to quality. Special training, conscientiousness, judgment, and expert knowledge receive little consideration. At times democracy leads to oligarchy of the worst kind. Talleyrand describes it as "an aristocracy of blackguards."

Democracy means in practice the evils of party politics. On many subjects that are discussed there is no general will or common mind. The party machine is so well-organised that the individual citizen who wants to exercise his judgment is given little or no freedom. He has to choose between two or more candidates who may be either knaves or fools and for none of whom he cares, and decide between two or three issues, none of which meets with his approval.

Faguet describes democracy as a cult of incompetence and a biological monstrosity. He believes that political progress demands that government should be in the hands of an intelligent oligarchy and that the many should implicitly obey it.

The wastefulness of democracy and the wide-scale bribery and corruption to which it leads are too well known to need comment. In his chapter on "The Money Power in Politics," Bryce shows that there are several instances of electors, members of legislatures, administrative officials, and even judicial officials succumbing to the temptation of illicit gain.

The moral and educational value of democracy is not as great as may appear at the outset. There is in a democracy constant temptation to falsification and lie. A calls B a liar and B pays back the compliment to A by calling him a bigger liar. Issues are to be vulgarised and popularised before they can make an appeal to the people. Democracy flatters people. It produces a pretentious proletariat. It hides from people

their deficiency. It engenders in them a false sense of equality. Every man thinks that he is as good as anybody else for the governance of his country.

Lord Bryce sums up the chief faults observable in modern democracies as follows :—

“(1) The power of money to pervert administration or legislation.

“(2) The tendency to make politics a gainful profession.

“(3) Extravagance in administration.

“(4) The abuse of the doctrine of Equality and failure to appreciate the value of administrative skill.

“(5) The undue power of party organisations.

“(6) The tendency of legislators and political officials to play for votes in the passing of laws and in tolerating breaches of order.”

In evaluating the various criticisms of democracy, it is well to bear in mind the fact that many of them are grossly exaggerated and that some of them mutually cancel each other out. Besides, if democracy is a bad form of government, what is the way out? Is there any other form of government which is as good as democracy, if not better? It is perhaps too early to say whether dictatorship in the long run will be a success or failure. Nevertheless, there is no gainsaying the fact that in as much as dictatorship is a denial of individual liberty and initiative, it is contrary to the development of personality, which we conceive to be the supreme end and destiny of man. However benevolent modern dictatorship may be, it is despotism. It suppresses all criticisms and all organisations which are not its own. In the words of Lord Lothian, it promises stability and order in the trying circumstances of the time. But it is not a permanent remedy. A. L. Lowell writes : “No form of Government is a panacea for all human ills ; and it is mischievous to search for one instead of improving what we have. The alternative to democracy to-day is autocracy, wielded by

a ruler, elected or self-chosen, who will inevitably place restraints upon liberty, not in industry alone, but before long on the free expression of opinion and the right of combination ; for autocracy cannot live in the presence of organised "opposition."

Proof. Beni Prasad states the case against dictatorships as follows : "A succession of capable dictators is an inherent difficulty. The inevitable insecurity of its basis may prompt repression at home and questionable adventures abroad. There is the additional risk of a narrow creed being pushed too far, of the liberty of thought, expression and association being stifled and the stature of the people being dwarfed. Besides, dictatorship rests on the horns of a dilemma. Unless it improves the condition of the people it would soon forfeit public support. If it carries out economic and educational reform, it is outgrown by the people. It toys with war but military defeat may seal its fate. By its very nature, dictatorship is incapable of furnishing an effective solution of the political problem. Its appeal would diminish as parliamentarism improves its procedure and administrative mechanism."

IV. *The Future of Democracy.* The conclusion to which we are inevitably led is that democracy has no absolute worth. It has only conditional worth. It does not contain panacea for all the ills of the world. The worst failings of democracy are due to immaturity and are likely to be overcome with growing experience. Its supreme value is ethical and educational. The foundation on which it rests, viz. the worth of every human personality, is unshakable.

Democracy, we believe, is a right organization, embodying a sound principle. The evils which we see in it are not inevitable. They can be cured by the people themselves, by proper education, reflection, and experience. We do not agree with those who say that the only way to cure the evils of democracy is to end it. What needs to be ended is the prevailing international

anarchy, using such means as an effective League of Nations, planned economy, disarmament and the removal of tariff and racial barriers.

If, as we believe, democracy requires to be mended and not ended, what are the specific ways in which this process can be accomplished? Several writers have given their attention to this question. Some address themselves to the changes in people's education and character which they consider to be necessary if democracy is to succeed. Others propose specific changes in the machinery of the democratic organization to make it better suited to changing conditions.

Turning to the first group of writers, we find that Prof. Hearnshaw lays down the following conditions:—

- (1) A high standard both of honesty and of honour.
- (2) A high level of intelligence and a sound system of education.
- (3) A clear consciousness of the community.
- (4) A sound public opinion, a sensitive social conscience, and an effective general will.

To these conditions, we may add

- (5) Social and industrial democracy.

J. W. Garner lays down the following as the essential conditions of democracy:

(1) 'A relatively high degree of political intelligence, an abiding interest in public affairs, a keen sense of public responsibility, and a readiness to accept and abide by the decision of the majority', coupled with a respect for the rights of minorities.

- (2) Facilities for elementary education.
- (3) Education in political matters and training in the habits of self-government.
- (4) A high moral level.

Among the suggestions advanced for improving the

machinery of the democratic organisations, the views of the following writers deserve mention :—

Lord Lothian says (1) that government should be conducted under guarantees of freedom of speech and criticism, and political and economic initiative for the individual and (2) that it should be changeable, without violence, at the ultimate decision of an adult electorate.

Andre Mavrois suggests "an individual leadership for a defined purpose and a fixed period" as a check upon dictatorship. Others suggest a strong executive. Lord Eustace Percy claims that the British constitution saves itself by the Monarchical Prime Ministership and that "the day when he (the Prime Minister) falls under the domination of a party caucus there will be no alternative to dictatorship." Parliament's first and supreme duty is, therefore, to make strong Prime Ministers. Their freedom is its freedom ; their strength its strength."

Other suggestions made by Lord Percy are :—

(1) Parliament should concern itself with broad questions of policy and not lose itself in petty details. It should deal with taxation and expenditure as broad issues of policy, and voice grievances arising out of the misdirection of expenditure and the unfair incidence of taxes. "It should abolish the absurd custom of procedure, which precludes reference, in almost ordinary debates, to any questions involving legislation."

(2) Parliament should take the initiative in formulating Bills. It should not depend too largely on over-driven Government departments for formulating legislative proposals. It should constitute a series of committees of the House for this purpose. These committees should re-examine the whole field of the relations between government, central and local, and the individual.

(3) Other committees of Parliament should be constituted "to watch the administrative action of particular departments,



to examine departmental orders and regulations before issue, to investigate individual complaints and to make representation to ministers."

(4) An economic council should be constituted by Crown nomination, as nearly as possible representative, not of economic opinion, but of economic power. Government and Parliament should use this Council in the preparation of legislation. It should further examine the whole field of the relation between government and industry.

(5) The Crown should be given the freedom to create life peers and the House of Lords should have its full share of the task of re-planning legislation.

Writing on "Parliament as it Should be," Sir Stafford Cripps claims that the three attributes of democracy are :

(1) That the people must have a free and unfettered choice of their representatives, with a right of recall at stated periods.

(2) That the people must signify by their choice the policy that they desire to be carried out.

(3) That the representatives must be able to carry through the desired policy without undue delay and without outside interference from any particular interests or persons. To give effect to these practical attributes of democracy, Sir Stafford Cripps recommends :—

(1) The abolishing of the leisurely methods of nineteenth century law-making ;

(2) The House of Commons taking a bold line when it has the support of the country behind it and effectively controlling the manner and *tempo* of the nation's progress, not being brow beaten by a non-democratic Second Chamber ; and

(3) The forming of functional committees to supervise the legislative and administrative activities of the ministers.

H. Sidebotham believes that parliamentary system may be consistent with the dictatorship of committees.

Lord Bryce concludes his discussion on the relative merits and demerits of democracy in the following terms :—

If the optimists overvalued the moral influence of democracy, the pessimists undervalued its practical aptitudes. It has reproduced most of the evils which have belonged to other forms of government, though in different forms, and the few it has added are less serious than those evils of the older governments which it has escaped.

(1) It has maintained public order while securing the liberty of the individual citizen.

(2) It has given a civil administration as efficient as other forms of government have provided.

(3) Its legislation has been more generally directed to the welfare of the poorer classes than has been that of other governments.

(4) It has not been inconstant or ungrateful.

(5) It has not weakened patriotism or courage.

(6) It has been often wasteful and usually extravagant.

(7) It has not produced general contentment in each nation.

(8) It has done little to improve international relations and ensure peace, has not diminished class selfishness, has not fostered a cosmopolitan humanitarianism nor mitigated the dislike of men of a different colour.

(9) It has not extinguished corruption and the malignant influences wealth can exert upon government.

(10) It has not removed the fear of revolutions.

(11) It has not enlisted in the service of the State a sufficient number of the most honest and capable citizens.

(12) Nevertheless, it has, taken all in all, given better practical results than either the Rule of One Man or the Rule

of a Class, for it has at least extinguished many of the evils by which they were defaced.

In concluding our discussion on democracy, we may very well use the words of Edward Carpenter : "O, disrespectable democracy, I love thee." "Democracy is dead, long live democracy."



# **The Future of Democracy.**

**By**

**M. S. SRINIVASA SARMA.**

The value of an enquiry into the future of democracy is diminished from the outset by several considerations—above all by the fact that there are only a few people who can survey human activity in all its ramifications. Most of us are compelled to restrict ourselves to a single or to a few spheres of interest ; but the less a man knows of the past and the present, the more unreliable must his judgment of the future prove. Secondly, judgments depend upon subjective expectations and personal factors in one's own experience and temperament. Moreover, it is not a pleasant task to discuss the future of democracy. Any criticism of it will seem to many a sin, and the consideration of its fallacies and inadequacies worse than sin. We are not willing to be disillusioned, and we make a virtue of our blindness as a sort of advanced thought. God knows we need ideals ; but it is possible to put ourselves so out of touch with things as they are that we become only ineffective dreamers. In a discussion of this kind, therefore, it is safe, as Prof. Banerjea suggests, to indicate what is likely to happen on the basis of an intensive psychological study of the inherent principles of human behaviour ; because, societies and governments are founded not on the ideals, but on the nature of man.

Now, "democracy" is a term with a remarkable variety of meanings. We shall take it to mean a form of government which confers the power of ruling upon the members of the community as a whole. Since it accords the individual the power to govern, it assumes that he possesses a capacity for sovereignty. And the seat of this capacity can only be his

reason, since in reason alone is to be found that breadth of view and levelness of vision which equips man for the judgment of the world. Reason lifts man above the sphere of particular existences and invests him with a peculiar power of independence and universality. These powers under the names of liberty and equality are taken to be the foundation-stones of democracy. It is clear therefore that democracy does not mean "the rule of the demos" as its etymology seems to signify ; for a mere counting of heads without regard to their contents is nothing short of mid-summer madness.

The central notion of popular sovereignty involves three assumptions : (1) the power of ruling is distributed by units one of which is vested in each individual of the community, (2) the power of the collection of these individual units is accepted as being authoritative over that of the single individual as well as of less numerous collections, and (3) the basis of conferring a share of power upon each individual is taken to be his possession of reason. But democracy, to be effective, must reckon with the obvious and undoubted fact that the great mass of human beings is neither sufficiently intelligent nor sufficiently interested to follow political issues at all. However, it is the weight of numbers that counts with all advocates of democracy. But they ignore the fact that ninety-nine per cent of people in all countries possess neither the knowledge nor the patience to scrutinise the relative merits of diverse appeals to them, and that the majority are always more swayed by passions than by reason. Shakespeare describes beautifully how the same crowd of Roman citizens that hail the "noble Brutus", and are for giving him a statue with his ancestors, in less than an hour on hearing Antony, rush madly against Brutus and his comrades, shouting "fire, burn, kill, slay, let not a traitor live." This is the mentality of the masses at *all* times ; they are carried off their feet by orations and sensational newlines. The "universal literacy" and cheap

journalism in modern nations have intensified, not mitigated the evil. It is thus that the majority at every election vote not through calm discrimination but in response to catching slogans. Rabindranath Tagore, after observing the working of democracy in America gave his considered opinion in these words : "Democracy makes a deliberate study of the laws of the dark patches in the human intellect, wherewith to help itself to create an atmosphere of delusion through hints, gestures, yells and startling grimaces for the purpose of stupifying the popular mind." 26, 671

The theory of electoral democracy is that the great, good, and capable men, statesmen and leaders in affairs would offer themselves for the suffrage of their fellowmen, and be elected for their known gifts and virtues. But the business of getting elected is susceptible to considerable complications and demands, which favour craft and deception rather than honesty, ignorant self-assertiveness rather than genuine merit, "the gift of the gab" rather than wisdom and practical ability. The ritual of election which is the life-breath of democracy involves a criminal waste of time and money which ultimately brings about the demoralisation of the entire community. No wonder therefore that Lecky concludes that "the forms of corruption under a pure democracy are far more detrimental to the prosperity of nations than those which existed in other days". That corruption always flourishes under democratic governments is evidenced by the example of the United States of America which is the birth place of "Tammany." Further, Gresham's law applies to politics as well as finance. Just as bad money drives out good money so bad legislators drive out good ones. To devise a method of preventing incompetence and knavery from public office and of selecting and preparing the best to rule for the common good—this is the problem of political philosophy. Plato laments that "the people have no understanding and only repeat what the rulers are pleased to

to tell them", and complains that whereas in simple matters like shoe-making we think only a specially trained person will serve our purpose, in politics we presume that everyone who knows how to get votes knows how to administer a state !

Again, men can be free only when they are approximately equal in capacity and power. Equality, if we accept the teaching of experience, is the grossest biological falsehood. Nature has made men unequal both in the degree and the kind of their powers and has even implicitly stratified them according to types and levels of capacity. Inevitable hereditary differences in vigor and ability breed social and artificial differences ; strength is made stronger, and weakness weaker by every invention and discovery. It is sometimes fondly believed that all men could be made equal to the best if only the educational process could be sufficiently improved. This pious wish, however laudable, is blind to the fundamental fact that the success of education is entirely dependent upon the *kind* of mind which receives the instruction and the *sort* of ability that reacts on it and integrates it into a system of knowledge. The educator is no creator ; nor could he obliterate the native differences and inborn defects by any magic wand. As Prof. Starch says 'Education and training do not equalise abilities ; in fact equal practice tends to increase differences in achievement and skill. The more gifted individuals profit more relatively and absolutely than the less gifted.' Education is thus not a levelling process. As Dr. McDougall points out "it is more a differentiating process. The more opportunities for education are multiplied and freely offered to all, the more surely will the better endowed increase the interval between themselves and their less gifted fellows." If it were ever possible by means of the enforcement of the unalterable eugenic laws for the improvement of the human race, so to raise the moral and intellectual qualities of the masses as to render them fit to exercise the

franchise worthily, then democracy might be described as "the best and divinest form of government."

Personal liberty also is no less a fiction. Although our desires are infinite, their free and untrammelled gratification is everywhere thwarted by obstacles—by conflicts with our fellows and the limitations of experience itself. In brief the perpetual frustration of our plans together with the hard facts of biological inequality render abundantly clear the impossibility of deriving from experience the notion that men are free and equal.

A study of history points out that the growth of human civilisation presents two aspects. On the one hand it includes all the knowledge and power that men have acquired in order to master the forces of nature and win resources for the satisfaction of human needs; on the other it includes all the necessary arrangements whereby men's relations to each other are regulated. While mankind has made solid advances in the conquest of nature and may expect to make still greater ones, no such claim can be established for a corresponding advance in the regulation of human affairs. Every advance in culture and civilisation has so far been built upon coercion and instinctual renunciation; and it appears fairly certain that without external compulsion and physical coercion the majority of human individuals would not submit to the labour necessary for acquiring newer and more advanced forms of culture. It is therefore doubtful whether it is possible in the present stage of our cultural organisation to bring into existence the perfected form of democratic government. The first difficulty is wherefrom we are to get the necessary group of superior, dependable and disinterested leaders who are to act as educators of the future generations; and secondly it is staggering to contemplate the stupendous amount of force that will be unavoidable if the ideals are to be translated into achievements. The limitations of man's capacity for



education set bounds to the efficacy of such a transformation of human relations ; and the native laziness and the inherent unwillingness of man for the sacrifice of selfishness are further impediments to the realisation of our cherished goal. Perhaps it is for these reasons that J. S. Mill felt that large assemblies were unfitted not only for administration but for the direct work of legislation, and pointed out that ignorance and incapacity would be more common there than knowledge and administrative skill, and that self-interest would be a more powerful motive force than the love of justice. That is why Rousseau held that pure democracy was a government which might do for gods, but was too perfect a government for men.

The fault of democracy is that it forgets to make men intelligent when it makes them sovereign. Government, in the opinion of Aristotle, is too complex a thing to have its issues decided by number, when lesser issues are reserved for knowledge and ability. The tragedy of democracy is that ability is sacrificed to number, while numbers are manipulated by trickery. Political institutions do not exist in a social vacuum ; and a government, like water, does not rise above its source. The character of a government must therefore be closely related to the cultural level of its people, and to the character of the affairs with which it is concerned. Countries and communities are today no longer self-contained sections of the earth's surface. An international outlook and a wide knowledge of the world are greatly and continuously needed in every branch of political administration. The complexities of economic problems, the intricacies of international affairs, and the difficulties of currency and trade relations make the task of government extremely hard. Behind each of these lies a body of specialist knowledge which is not available to the ordinary man who shrinks from the effort involved in acquiring specialism. Men of exceptional insight, creative ability and high character are needed to tackle the

problems of modern governments. The masses are unskilled and incompetent to give a direction to the solution of these problems. Therefore any attempt to settle governmental questions by votes is sure to result in disastrous consequences. Rightly does Mommsen say that "tyranny and chaos are everywhere the result of universal suffrage."

It is a notorious fact that the incompetence of the voters and their representatives today has been the cause of the universal distrust of parliamentary forms of government. The financial and economic life of mankind has become world-wide, and is suffering a vast demoralisation by the universal insecurity in monetary standards. There is no evidence anywhere of democracy's ability to tackle this difficult and urgent problem. It has proved incapable of producing politicians competent to meet satisfactorily the trinity of problems that face every government today, namely, war, a stable money basis, and a world economic unity. We are faced by the need for reorganisation and reorientation—political, social, and intellectual—quite beyond the power of the common voter and his politicians. The striking material progress of the nineteenth century led men to imagine that parliamentary government was its cause; but the economic ills of today have produced a revulsion of feeling against this type of government.

The rise of dictatorship in a number of modern countries is only one indication of the inherent weakness of the democracy of numbers. In any democracy the great danger is mediocrity aggravated by indifference and the moral oppression of numbers which result so frequently in the domination of the minority who feel strongly. Where there is room for endless difference of opinion, the solution of governmental problems is apt to be left to the energetic few. Political institutions must be judged by their working in practice; and the theory that everyone has an indefeasible right to share, irres-

pective of fitness, in the government of the country has borne fruit in incompetent administration and lack of continuity in policy. Again we have the reactions produced by the war such as readiness to resort to violence, impatience with the inevitable procrastination and delays of democratic forms, willingness to obey a strong man, and the militarisation even of political activities—flags, drills, demonstrations, uniforms and salutes which have been the potent causes of the disillusionment and discontentment which has led on the one hand to dictatorship that emphasises the capitalist side and on the other to dictatorship that emphasises the communistic side. Parliamentary democracy is thus encountering a challenge both from the Right and from the Left.

To carry out any plan of comprehensive reconstruction involves either the atmosphere of dictatorship where opposition is forcibly at a minimum or a long period of time in which critics can be satisfied. The very nature of democracy precludes the possibility of action that is at once swift and comprehensive. Decision in politics requires the trained mind; but the existing state of things limits its possession only to a small fraction of the body politic. That is why Voltaire preferred monarchy to democracy; in a monarchy it is only necessary to educate one man, whereas in a democracy you must educate millions; and the grave-digger gets them all before you can educate ten per cent of them. Carlyle therefore proclaims that "democracy is by the nature of it a self-cancelling business, and gives in the long run a net result of zero". This universal debacle of democratic mediocrity and incompetence, chicanery and corruption has naturally resulted in the transition from parliamentary government to dictatorship in Italy and Spain, Germany and Turkey, Greece and Russia, and Poland and Portugal. The process of consolidation is both long and complex. However much courage is the key to success, courage without technical efficiency will not carry very

far, and no amount of enthusiasm can improvise in a day the results which high technique seeks to attain. Dictatorship is better, because it is more honest ; and as Napoleon said, "it has no need to lie ; it acts, and says nothing". But democracy is degradation of statesmanship ; it means the expensive maintenance, in addition to the real ruling class, of a large parasitic class of politicians whose function it is to serve the rulers and deceive the ruled.

It is wrong to think that liberty could be enjoyed and individual improvement could be facilitated only under a democracy. Enlightenment, education and government are not necessarily the fruit of democracy. What is wanted is an open field for the natural talent. The robust commonsense of the man in the street in our country which has embodied itself in the proverb "why worry whether it is Rama or Ravana who rules over you so long as you are under a good government" finds its echo in the famous lines of Alexander Pope : "for forms of government let fools contend : whatever is best administered is best". This conviction of the public is a conclusive proof that good government is the only desirable thing—no matter what form it is ; for it is characterised by security, prosperity and tranquility. To be able to dispense impartial justice, a government must be independent of all classes, parties and interests.

We have therefore to pay more attention to the operating forces than to the mere event of the failure of democracy today everywhere. Democracy which was hailed as the final and finest form of government has, by endorsing the patent fallacy that one head is as good as another, destroyed the possibility of effective government. As Hugh Tailor points out in his "*Government by Natural Selections*", "only a nation whose political system habitually encourages government by the ablest can ensure the leadership, the organisation and the wise treatment of internal and external difficulties necessary to

maintain a proud position through centuries". No political system based on universal suffrage and frequent elections can attract men of the highest character and ability to the service of the state.

Hitler has established a dictatorship in order to force the pace of progress with suitable reforms. Italy has adopted a course not remote from dictatorship under the cover of monarchy, but through institutions similar to those of Hitler. Russia has gone one step further and annihilated the Czar and his family, abolished property and private foreign trade, and is running the government with a party whose membership is not a hundredth of its population. But the aim is nevertheless to make Russia self-contained and prosperous. In every case therefore the changes introduced during this century both in the social and political systems of the various nationalities of Europe imply that the common man does not in fact know what is good for him, and that as an alternative, the conscious minority who knows what is needed and how to get it must take control of public policy. All great advances are initiated by minorities, usually by minorities of one. The method of discussion, persuasion, election, and vote is necessarily cumbersome and protracted; it is inevitably a source of impatience to the eager idealist and a cause of disgust to the zealous reformer. The dictatorships in the various countries are not mere usurpations of domestic power; they represent an almost desperate effort to break out of the vicious circle of parochial politics, and to grapple with the real problems affecting their countries. Demosthenes said that "it is easier to do business with Philip than with the Athenian democracy"; and today from the standpoint of international organisation, it is always more convenient to deal with a country under a dictatorship than to negotiate with the representatives of democracies; for, once the chief is persuaded, success for any project is assured. Therefore, "the fundamental problem of politics," in the memor-

able words of Irving Babbitt," "is not the doctrine of the rights of man but the doctrine of the RIGHT MAN."

Statecraft is not an exact science ; it is essentially practical, and is based on a thorough knowledge of human nature. The form of government best suited to any particular country is that under which positions of trust and authority are most easily attainable by its worthiest citizens. Good government is the greatest blessing ; and it matters nothing whether the supreme control of affairs lies in the hands of a single ruler or a permanent council of administration. Government is an art, the highest and the most difficult of all ; therefore, it should be entrusted only to those who have the necessary qualifications for it in the knowledge, the interest in affairs, and the character needed for properly fulfilling political functions. Of course, a wise statesman will only trust with political power those in whom he can recognise the existence of the necessary qualifications, while at the same time he may take the risk of making practical experiments so as to give the opportunity of securing a training in the duties of government to all those who seem to him to deserve the trust. Still it remains true that for the preservation of the integrity, independence, continuity and progress of nations, political influence must rest as it has always rested with the aristocracy of birth, wealth, intellect, and character. Napoleon, himself the product of a Revolution whose watchwords were "liberty, equality, and fraternity" states that "the essence of government is—Everything *for* the people and nothing *by* them".

The great idea at the root of the Hindu social organisation is that the individuals have different responsibilities and rights, and that every citizen shall be free to develop his distinctive powers for the best and most effective service of the state. Everyone has his proper place in the arrangement of society ; and no one can do good by attempting that which is not appropriate to what he is and the place he is in. We

live in a conditioned world. Duty is relative. What is right for one is not always so for another ; and it is best that each man is appointed to that which is proper to his position in life. Swami Vivekananda lets us into the secret when he says that "whenever you see the most humanitarian ideas fall into the hands of the multitude, the first result you notice is degradation. It is learning and intellect that help to keep things safe". That democratic freedom and representative government are in themselves most excellent things no one can doubt ; but a real demos capable of governing has yet to come into existence. What is urgently needed is the re-making of the individuals on the basis of the Gitaic teaching "To work you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof". The only remedy for the modern ills of society is to work for the Hindu social ideal in which every individual is to think only of his duties, to believe that the performance of duties is the greatest of all human privileges, and to conceive of duties as the sole possible measure of all rights worth the name. To people inspired by this ideal of life, any form of government is acceptable so long as the administration of affairs is carried on in such a manner as to satisfy the demands of an all-round human progress, insuring at the same time the realisation of the poet's dream regarding that "far off divine event towards which the whole creation moves".

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# **The Future of Democracy.**

By

**M. VENKATARAMAIAH.**

*Andhra University, Waltair.*

## **I**

My predecessors in the symposium represent the three different schools of thought on the subject of democracy at the present day. Professor Bannerjee is an enthusiastic admirer of it ; Professor Sarma is a hostile critic and Professors Sivaram and Asirvatham represent the more moderate opinion which regards democracy as having a future if certain defects are removed. I should like to fall in with the views of Professor Bannerjee for I believe that democracy is not a lost cause and that the future of human progress is closely bound up with the fortunes of democracy. It is only when the ideals for which it stands become universally accepted and it is only when effect is given to those ideals that it will be possible for men to live in peace among themselves and direct all their efforts to that co-operative enterprise as a result of which the earth may be really converted into the heaven dreamt of by philosophers and poets.

In discussing about the future of democracy it is best to maintain the distinction between three different questions that arise. There is in the first place the ideal or the end which democracy places before itself. Secondly there is the question of the institutional machinery that has to be devised if the ideal is to be realised. And finally there is the question whether conditions are at all times favourable for the working of the democratic machinery in the solution of the problems of social life. These three questions need separate consideration.



Much of the pessimism regarding the future of democracy that is now widespread is the result of a tendency to draw inferences from the conditions now prevailing in some of the parts of the world—conditions which after all may only be temporary. The grave problems created by the last world war and the sense of frustrated ambition to which it gave rise in several countries gave opportunities for the opponents of democracy to decry it and establish other forms of government in its place. The dictatorships in Italy, Germany and several other countries in Central and Eastern Europe have been attracting the attention of many thinkers and some of them have concluded that the future rests with dictatorships and not with democracy. It is however a matter for serious consideration whether these dictatorships will live long. Dictators are not immortal. The question 'who will follow the present dictators' or 'what will happen after their death' has not as yet been answered. Observers have remarked how dictatorships are a phenomena peculiar to countries where agriculture is the main occupation of the people, where their standard of life is low and where there is a large amount of illiteracy—the only exception to this being Germany. There is therefore the possibility that as these countries become more industrialised and literacy becomes more widespread among them there will be popular revolts against dictators followed by the establishment of democracies. For there is nothing to show that dictators have been better able to solve the grave problems with which their countries are faced than democracies. Unemployment, financial instability, economic depression and fall in the standards of living continue to face them as much as they face the democratic countries. It is true that they have succeeded in preventing strikes but it remains to be seen whether they have not in most cases brought despair to the working classes and made them feel more sullen and less

disposed to work hard. It is now clear that it is only by appealing to vague phrases like national glory and by making preparations for war that dictators hope to keep themselves in authority. Whether every one of them will succeed in his militaristic enterprises remains to be seen. Any failure in the battle field is certain to bring about their collapse.

It is to be noted in this connection that countries with a longer democratic tradition—England, U. S. A., France, Canada, Australia, New Zealand etc.—have not ceased to be democratic. On the other hand they have adopted a number of bold measures and strengthened the appropriate institutions and succeeded in meeting the crisis without sacrificing the essential features of democratic government. The concentration of power in the hands of the Executive and the provision for a more speedy decision of public questions, retaining all along the principle of free criticism of those in authority is a remarkable testimony to the flexibility of democratic machinery. There is therefore no room for any one to get gloomy over the future of democracy.

## II

The ideal for which democracy stands is one which is destined to have a larger following than the ideals of monarchy and aristocracy which have been tried and found wanting in the past and of which Fascism and Communism are modern manifestations. The aim of democracy is the creation of a society in which all individuals will have the equal freedom to make the best of their lives and develop the worth that is in them to the highest possible extent instead of a society in which the majority have to toil and work hard in order that a minority may lead a civilized and cultured life. Democracy will bring about a society in which each individual—whether man or woman, noble man or commoner, white, black or brown, orthodox or heterodox—has the power to select

the ends of his life however crude they may appear to others instead of lending himself merely to further the ends of other individuals. Whether one should advocate democracy or not depend on one's answer to two questions—what kind of men and women does one like to see in the world and of what kind of community does he like them to become members. An anti-democrat is one who wishes to have men and women possessing no individuality or will of their own and following blindly like sheep any one who calls himself a shepherd though it is to the shambles that he may ultimately lead them. A democrat is one who wants to see that every man or woman has an ideal, a strength of will, a developed personality with high moral courage. An anti-democrat tries to create a community where a few occupy positions of authority and dictate to the rest with a view to make them mere tools and instruments for furthering the rulers' interests while a democrat advocates a community where the happiness of the common man is regarded as having the same significance as that of men of birth or wealth or of any other privilege. To enable each and every individual to have an adequate share in the benefits of civilised and cultured life is the purpose of democracy. It regards each man as an end in himself and not as a mere instrument for furthering the ends of others. A brotherhood based on the equal freedom of all is what it aims at.

### III

Equality in the above sense is the bedrock of democracy. The next question to be considered is on what principle should government be constructed if the ideal of equality is to be realised. Democrats agree with the non-democrats that in every community there must be a strong and efficient government with full power to enforce the existing law and to modify it in accordance with the ever-changing

requirements of society. They however differ from the non-democrats in believing that government ought to derive its authority and power from the people constituting the community and not from the mere accident of birth or wealth or the possession of physical force. There are two parties to the exercise of power. There are the rulers who exercise it and there are the people on whom it is exercised. The holders of power have no inherent claim to it. They have to use it not for their advantage but for the advantage of the people over whom it is exercised. There is always the danger and even the certainty—of power being abused by its holders in their own interests. It has been done in the past and it is being done now. Abuse of power always means that it is being utilised not to promote the equal freedom of all but to satisfy the needs of those in authority. The democratic machinery of government tries to prevent this by making it necessary for those in power to become answerable to the people at large for all their actions. Power coupled with responsibility is the discovery made by democracy.

Power without responsibility is tyranny. Responsibility without power leads to anarchy. Power accompanied by responsibility is the ideal form of government. This principle is the product of the modern scientific age. In the world of science there are leaders whose authority is accepted and obeyed by all. But they become leaders and are accepted as leaders not because on a fine morning they announce themselves to be leaders to the accompaniment of trumpets but because they meet other scientists in conference, discuss with them, prove to the satisfaction of all the truth of their conclusions and as a consequence of all this are acclaimed as leaders. They are overthrown from leadership and others take their place if as a result of further investigation and experiment their conclusions are proved false. So also in the field of politics leadership should be based on experiment

and proved merit. Those who claim to be leaders must justify their claim ; and it is only by allowing others to criticise their programmes and policies and discuss their actions and the results of those actions that they can justify that claim. Dictators think that they are all-knowing and that they have a monopoly of truth, justice and righteousness and that it is a sacrilege for others to criticise their actions. It is in democracies alone that government is carried on on the basis of discussion, conference and consultation and this results in power being conferred only on those that prove their capacity to exercise it in the interests of all. No one will seriously put forward the view that the method of science is inapplicable to the world of politics. It is also worthy of note in this connection that democracies have developed the art by which scientific conclusions can be arrived at regarding the effects of legislation and administration. The statistics which are collected and tabulated with care and the elaborate surveys that are made in regard to social and economic conditions afford the necessary data for drawing inferences as to the results of particular policies of government. Academic freedom is also another characteristic of democracies. It is their life-breath. It is this that enables the workers in Universities to study statistics and surveys in a dispassionate spirit and lay bare before the world at large the conclusions that follow from their studies and afford material for a scientific criticism of the actions of governmental authorities.

The machinery that is now used to select men competent to exercise governmental power and to hold them responsible consists of (1) the exercise of vote by all adults (2) continuous discussion of public questions by organised parties (3) elected legislatures and (4) cabinets and ministries responsible to these legislatures. Critics of democracy point out various defects in this machinery. They find that the common man whose vote determines the personnel of government

has not the knowledge, the intelligence, the independence and the interest that are necessary to enable him to make a proper selection of persons to be placed in authority and to judge about their actions when they approach him for his support in successive elections. Space does not permit a detailed answer to this charge. It may however be said that the charge is only partially correct and that the common man is not such a dullard as he is depicted to be or so ignorant of the central issues in politics which alone are important in forming judgments on public questions. It is not the vote that is of significance but the discussions that precede it, the discussions that enlighten the voter as to how he should vote and give him a knowledge of the issues placed before him. Moreover the knowledge which a voter should possess in regard to public questions is different from the knowledge which experts and professed students of the subject are expected to have. Political issues on which the voter is called on to pronounce his judgment are very much alike the other issues in life—economic, social, religious etc—on which he is expected to pass judgments from day to day. A common man who wants to have a house need not be an architect or a mason or a carpenter. He is competent to select the kind of house he wishes to live in even though he cannot build a house without the help of experts. A common man need not himself be an expert eugenicist, or a doctor or a trained physiologist before selecting the woman whom he wants to marry. Not even a Hitler or a Mussolini knew all the details of currency, finances, banking, tariffs and unemployment in regard to which they claim to have the ability to arrive at decisions. There are only certain questions that the common man has to understand and perhaps certain aspects of them. Most of the questions with which modern governments are concerned deal with the life of the common man—his health his education, his housing, his employment, the hours of

his work and his wages, his amusements etc. There are unused abilities in the common man which are roused to action if only a proper approach is made in the appropriate direction. The growth of education which is a characteristic of democracies gives him the knowledge that is required. Critics like Prof. Sarma do not seem to have any faith in education and that is because even in democracies it is the traditional type of education that is being imparted, the type that pays too much attention to the three R's and the classics and book-learning and creates distinctions between the cultured class and the working class. There are indications to show that the common man can be made to intelligently follow political questions and note intelligently.

The charge that the voter is not free to vote as he pleases and that he does not take sufficient interest in politics has more truth in it. This is because he is economically under the control of the rich man and the capitalist. Equality has been introduced only in the field of politics but not in the economic sphere. The remedy here is to extend democracy into the economic world also. Private property in the agents of production is inconsistent with true democracy. The liberty of the common man requires the adoption of socialism and the vote will have a real significance the greater the economic equality between individual and individual. The accusation brought by Prof. Sarma that democracy leads to bribery and corruption has no truth about it. There was more corruption in the aristocratic age of Walpole than there is in modern England. Corruption in a democracy is nothing comparable to that which prevailed under monarchies with their mistresses and Court favourites. And if this disparity in the economic field to which reference was made above is removed there will be no rich to corrupt the poor and there will be no poor under temptation to receive bribes. The next step in democracy is a bold move therefore towards greater

economic equality. The lack of interest in politics shown by the common man is also the result of the prevailing economic inequality. He is still overworked and under-paid. Science has increased the productive capacity of man to such an extent that a uniform six-hour day has become possible. The introduction of such a working will give that leisure to the common man which will enable him to take interest in public questions.

Critics of democracy attack not only the vote of the common man but also the parliaments of the present day. They are being spoken of as talking shops, as indulging in too much criticism of the executive, as adopting obstructionist tactics, as preventing the taking of prompt action by the executive and as being unable to dispose of the large amount of work coming before them. There is some truth in this. But it does not follow that democracy requires parliaments in their modern form. Reform in parliamentary procedure, the introduction of devolution and regionalism, the transfer of more authority to the executive—which equally with the legislature derives its authority from the people—the development of administrative law and the growth of Committees of Consultation are some among the reforms that have been advocated and put into effect to remove the defects created by parliamentary organisation. We can think of many other reforms along these lines. Responsibility of government based on a free criticism of its policy and action is the principle on which democratic government is based. The actual machinery of government may be varied in the light of our growing experience in any direction necessary so long as the principle is not departed from. The Steam Engine today is not the same crude machine as was invented by Stephenson though the principle on which its working is based has been the same. The same is true of democratic machinery.



## IV

Democracy is government by conference and consultation. When a party in power finds that its programme is not acceptable to the public at large and that the programme of some other party is acceptable it resigns its power into the hands of the other party and consents to government being carried on by it. Discussion and willingness to abide by the results of discussion are the features of democracy. The question that is now asked by the critics of democracy is whether there are no limits to the utility of government by discussion, whether such a government is workable and practicable under all circumstances. In war such a government is found unworkable. Is it not conceivable that a situation parallel to that created by a war may arise when parties opposed to each other are not prepared to discuss their differences but are determined to fight them out by taking recourse to force and violence? The world of politics is ultimately a world of action. It is not a world in which the combatants are engaged in the discovery of abstract truth. Does it not therefore follow that where there is a disagreement on fundamentals between rival parties the democratic machinery is bound to fail? These are serious questions and it is situations of this character that have brought Communism and Fascism into the field. They are the children born of impatience, unwillingness to wait till the opponent becomes convinced of the truth of the other party's argument. There are two grave issues of modern times in the solution of which the democratic method of settlement through Conference may prove to be of doubtful utility. The issue of Capitalism is one and the issue of Imperialism is another.

As a democrat I should like to say that force or violence should not be resorted to until the method of Conference has been made full use of and until all possible avenues of peaceful settlement have been utilised. There is always the prospect

of the opponent coming round. Moreover there are in many cases a difficulty of distinguishing between fundamentals and non-fundamentals. If force is regarded as having a moral justification behind it when fundamentals are concerned there is a danger of its being resorted to even in the settlement of minor issues. We should always try persuasion and not lose faith in its efficacy.

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# **A Philosopher's Heaven.**

**By**

**DR. MAHENDRA NATH SIRCAR.**

*Presidency College, Calcutta,*

The conception of Heaven originates in us out of the constant press from within to free consciousness from its limits. Philosophy may give us illumined understanding but in this attempt it can never afford to ignore the unconscious prompting of our nature, to enjoy a finer existence, wider knowledge and higher values.

The idea is associated with the question not of unrestricted Existence simply, but of an existence implying worth or value. The world is a vale of tears ; and life, therefore, urged by a necessity construes and constructs an ideal world of Truth and Values. Heaven appeals to us not merely as an existence but as a delightful existence, from which the thorns of life are extinguished, or at least transformed. Whatever it is, it is always associated with a felicitous existence ; otherwise it has really no true significance.

An unrestricted existence is also a freedom of existence. Freedom and felicity go together. This freedom is the freedom of spirit, but not necessarily of creative spirit, for creative spirit implies tension and limitation ; creativeness has its joy, but it is the delight of a victory and expansion when the obstructions have been conquered and free play to spirit has been allowed. The free creativeness elevates us into the realm of values which offers an attractive prospect to the fine expression of personality ; hence it has been associated with the true spiritual or heavenly life.

Heavenly life is life moving in the creative urge of spirit realising ideal values which are either at the back of creation

or emerging out of it. The religious spirit has not gone beyond this and even to-day when science and religion has been meeting each other in the spirit of cordiality, the ancient Platonic Ideal world is being reinstated through Emergent evolution. A super-sensible world of values, beauty and Truth is associated with the heavenly world. Plato in his *Symposium* introduces us in a fit of philosophic enthusiasm to the perfect vision of beauty "not relative or changing, but eternal and absolute." "It is but an aspect of the divine extending over all things and having no limit of space and time." Plato is not clear if the human soul is absorbed in it or not. "Enough for time to have obtained the true beauty or good without enquiring preciously into the relation in which human beings stand to it". That the soul has such a reach of thought and is capable of the eternal nature, seems to imply that she too is eternal. This theory makes heaven purely a transcendent existence, having no touch with the mundane creation though it may be shaping things from above. This dualism of spirit and matter has made Heaven a far off distant event, which can be realised when the touch and domination of matter upon the soul has ceased to exist. Plato conceives a basic psyche grasp of ideas conditions the whole process of the universe.

This is the supreme craftsman on whom depends that degree of orderliness which the world exhibits. The true joy of the soul rises from the entertainment of the ideas and ideal perfection for which there is the secret urge.

Plotinus's conception of the Divine Hypostasis leads us through the successive emergence of the concrete phases of life from the one or the Good. Plotinus exhorts us to revere our personalities as 'temples of Gods', for in every individual person the three divine principles are present. And under favourable circumstances, our minds are irradiated by its effulgence. Plotinus sees the deliverance of man in the

centripetal movements, where the psyche becomes free from the touch of matter and divided life and becomes one with the one.

Plotinus sees the height of our realisation in the deliverance of the soul from the revolving outer circle of the universal soul and its installation in the motionless calm of the Intelligence and still better in the effulgent one. In the grades of Ascension Plotinus mentions ecstasy as the highest state of existence. He calls it the Banquet of the Gods—the life of absolute faith and pure enthusiasm, inspired by the draughts of the blisshful Hippocrène. The soul in so far as it tastes the transcendent beatitude is indistinguished from it. The Platonic inspiration was worked out in its logical sequence in Plotinus.

Bergson breaks away from the Platonic tradition and sees the heavenly beatitude more in the creative flow of life than in anything transcendental or statical. Bergson is inspired by the central principle of Christianity—resurrection and continuity of life, and he gets rid of the vexed question of the sensible and the super-sensible existences and discovers behind them the ever-flowing creative life. The ideal and the real world are equally encompassed by it.

The creative evolution affords the finer emergence of spirit and necessarily Bergson finds the best expression of spiritual life in Love. Bergson of course does not give us any account how Love expresses itself in its finest inspiration. He appears to have been influenced by the capacity of Love releasing vast energy and vitality which can influence the dormant and the sleeping life and help creativeness and break the inertia.

Bergson appears to have been influenced by the possibilities of life here and if one can foresee the full fruition of life one can invite the unfolding of life in Love as the promise of the heavenly life—the more of which we can comprehend, when life moves within us with its ease of expression. Bergson is

hampered by his vitalistic outlook and could not, therefore, conceive the expression of life without tension. Love in human affairs has in it tension, for it has to make its way through opposition. The opposition is ever continuous in creative existence even in its highest expression. Bergson has in his philosophy a sort of inherent dualism which prevents the full flowering of spiritual life and Bergson could not see in spiritual life any possibility beyond continuous emergence and resurrection.

Bergson's vision does not extend beyond the spiritual life in its earthly manifestation—for life and love in his conception works under an opposition. The need of a constant opposition to keep up the vigour of the creative urge lacks in the higher harmony of life. Bergson could not transcend this dualism for that would be surrendering the secret to creative evolution and expression.

Bergson appreciates the value of a dynamical equilibrium in the height of mystical consciousness in which the creative spirit passes into the dark night of the soul, in which the distance is removed between "the lover and the loved" and "the joy is boundless". But even in this equilibrium though "the soul becomes, in thought and feeling, absorbed in God, something of it remains outside and that something is the Will whence its action, if it would naturally proceed." The soul cannot continue in ecstasy--none of its rapture was lasting, because it was mere contemplation and action threw the soul back upon itself and thus divorced it from God. The action that now emerges from the soul is no longer the man's action. "Now it is God who is acting through the soul". Bergson could ascend to the dazzling height of the mystics, but he could not see the value of the timelessness of the mystical consciousness. He is attracted to the mystical life because it releases and reinforces the original *elan vital* to intensive creation, because it allows him more living power

to will to successfully overcome opposition for greater and better creation. Bergson's final vision therefore cannot get beyond the creative appeal and the vital expression of spirit through creation.

And he could not see the perfect harmony residing in the heart of things. There is a finer rhythm in life than creative harmony. Creative harmony prevails when the initial effort has been successful to mould, formulate and assimilate the obstructing element. It is the play of the psyche and the eros. It is the play of Prana and Rayee related in the Upanishads. But the spiritual life has a wider range and a better expression where it experiences no opposition, not even a self-imposed one, for here is spiritual expression, rather than creation *through a process of inversion*. Whatever it is, it points to the order where there is the spontaneity of spiritual expression in itself and not through an opposition.

This free, elastic and spontaneous expression as distinguished from the restricted creative energy has been the source of distinction of the life of spirit through nature and the life of spirit through self in the Vaisnava philosophy. Life reveals greater freedom and more spontaneity as it rises in the scale of existence. The tension that is felt in creative expression in nature is eased in the order of spirit. The Vaisnavas felt a greater and vaster world of spiritual existence with its enrapturing harmonics and beauties which are really transcendental and they cannot impress themselves on us, if the soul clings least to the earthly tendencies. The dynamism of life here is the finest and the swiftest, but the life's forces here are all directed to and consumed in the shining Love—life here naturally rises above its earthly expression and flies on the wings of unconquerable love which brightens the whole existence and reveals its supra-mental fineness and delicacy. Will is chastened by the flame of love and becomes God-centric—it may have the occasional eccentric creative expression

—even then it is only the reflection of the supreme will. The finite spirit through its wisdom, love and will reflect the transcendent divine, for its psychic make-up is completely transformed. Hence it is more divine life, in so far as it can be expressed on earth.

The transfiguration of the impulses with the impress of the divine consciousness upon the inner psyche in man reveals a luminous existence with its dignified harmony and ineffable beauty. The supra-mental existence may have finer expression and revelation without the sense of the least opposition. The Vaisnavas, as well as—in matter of fact—the devotional school of Mysticism have the better realisation of the functioning of psychic forces beyond the vital and the mental. This unique perception of psyche introduces a loftier vein in the conception of human destiny. For the human mind has no clear idea of the potentiality of the psychic being in man, which puts it in direct connexion with the divine expression where the uneducated vital and mental cannot function. The psyche is in direct touch with and is under the influence of the divine. Through the luminous psyche can the soul enjoy the wideness, transparency, beauties, felicity of spiritual life.

The soul recovers itself from the individualistic sense and receives the light of the spirit in which it can see the world and invite the fellowship of the community of spirits. Philosophers in the East and West have the vision of this Eternal community. "Community is more than aggregate of individuals, it is an enfolding spirit". It is St. Augustine's *Civitas dei*, and *Vaikuntha* of the Vaisnavas. The community of spirits unfolds the possibility of Eternal life vertically and horizontally, it is a life extended in all directions, and does not take the unilateral expression of spiritual life as implied in Bergson's conception.

Transcendent wisdom, radiant beauty and absorbing love are chief characteristics of heavenly life. Harmony was the



finer conception amongst the Greeks. Love implies harmony and something more. It is the captivating attraction towards an indissoluble union. The divine harmony allows the soul to feel the encompassing life, in a spirit of philosophic composure. The divine love impresses the spiritual amor—the maddening attraction of a complete union and absorbing fusion.

The harmony which is so natural to the spiritual life finds its soul in love and beauty and its finer consummation in absorption in love. But the identification of Love is dynamical identification ; which sustains itself through a centripetal and centrifugal movement, for Love is eternally associated with life and cannot forsake it. And it invites the sting and the cross. Cross is the sign not only of the sacrifice of Love, but also of its triumphant victory. The triumph is greatest when love through sacrifice becomes the conqueror. Love is at work to establish the heaven on Earth, and its greatest delight is to establish life through death and light through darkness. Love is the essence of life and light is the best expression of Love.

Love stirs up devotion and quickens up knowledge. Devotion gives a partial identification, knowledge complete identification. In intellectual love the spiritual life is exhibited at a higher level. The best gift of love is wisdom. The Gita, perhaps, hints at such love where it speaks of devotion with stress upon identification. The gifts of love are indeed fine spiritual assets in life ; as they reveal the finer forces of life and their radiant expressions ; but still life's movement is confined within the divine Hypostasis and cannot enjoy the basic reality.

The dynamic conception of life, however, fraught it is with intense and immense possibilities, cannot extend beyond concrete spirituality and aspire to the luminous silence, which transcends all concrete formations. The spiritual life opens

a new page when the effort is sincere to pass into the fathomless silence. It reveals the heart of reality in its supra-conceptual dignity and vastness. Here spiritual life is first dissociated from all personal holding and expression. It reveals a new spiritual perspective. The impersonal side and aspect of the spirit comes to view, before finally passing into its transcendent silence.

The truth and the dignity of spiritual height is measured by the freedom from the concentration of life through time. The finest expression in spirituality is attained where the consciousness is freed from the compelling sense of time. And this is partially realised in dynamic identification, but completely realised in the pivot of our being and consciousness.

Spiritual life opens a new chapter where consciousness enjoys the transcendence. This touch of transcendence has spiritual and philosophic importance. Philosophically it breaks the false sense of reality of the order of expression and establishes its ideality. It creates new aspirations for realising the finer joy of life in transcendence. The realisation of this transcendence yields immediately the unique sense of freedom of the self from its expression through life and concentration through space and time. This freedom is unique spiritual experience which is to be distinguished from the experience of spiritual harmony and creative delight.

It introduces us into a *terra incognita* of spiritual life, where life is released from all kinds of relativism and offers the Peace of illumined Silence. Radiant beauty and exquisite feelings are the immediate experiences when the spiritual dynamism becomes highly strung and their joy and values are so ever-pouring that the proper value of spiritual calm cannot be rightly assessed. Hence it takes long to appreciate and welcome the calm and the poise in spiritual life. The psychic satisfaction often closes the door to the superior realisation of the calm.

The concrete spirituality gives a dynamical identification. It cannot go beyond the equilibrium in spiritual life. But spiritual equilibrium is not to be confused with spiritual freedom. Even in Love mysticism we find the emphasis laid upon freedom, which is realised in the occasional release of the soul from the sense of history and time.

Life here presents a freedom which apparently has the disquieting sense of being cut off from all experience, but which eventually reveals the joy of an existence released from all concentration.

But this freedom can be only temporary, inasmuch as this transcendence is sought to fill our being with spiritual charges, and not completely to forsake the finite order and experience. The finite remains, not as finite, but as integrated with the absolute.

But this is not far enough, for it is not clear, that how in the life of spirit can distinction be accepted. The Bengal Vaisnava school even through love finds the value of spiritual transcendence and spiritual fusion or assimilation of the human and the Divine. Though they accept this high spiritual consummation, they do not insist upon its continuity. They emphasise the supra-conceptual nature of spiritual life. Conceptual thinking embraces the extremes either of the reality or illusions of distinctions, which spiritual life according to them denies.

In dynamic integration the spirit is disposed of the personal hold and enjoys the impersonal touch. It really reveals the deeper aspect of spiritual life beyond expression in radiant beauty, cosmic harmony and ineffable delight. It enthrones the silence of the spiritual life in the deep abyss of the soul. This experience of the super-personal in spiritual life is a new kind of experience. Spiritual life is so often associated with free creativeness that it is often difficult to appraise the true value of the touch of transcendent spirituality in which with

the wideness of being the self is gradually freed from its subjective concentration and construction. But this integration of super-personal experience is not to be completely dissociated from the personal experiences. They alternate in spiritual life.

Spiritual life is essentially dynamical, which comprises within both spiritual silence and spiritual expression, i.e. it sometimes overshapes all personal experiences and borders on the super-personal.

Bradley appreciates the value of super-personal life and experience, which is to him the true spiritual experience. This experience is unique and transcends all other experiences of the true, the good and the beautiful. This does not negate them, rather assimilate them in harmony. Thought must be present as a higher intuition. Will would be there where the ideal had become reality; and beauty, pleasure and feeling would live on in this total fulfilment. "Every flame of passion, chaste or carnal would still burn in the Absolute, unquenched and unabridged, a note absorbed in the harmony of its higher bliss." Bradley had been influenced by the intuition of the Absolute and the sense of the whole which give freedom from the restriction of life and relativism of thought. Bradley is anxious to discover from our psychic life an intuition which covers all its contents and at the same time transcends them. He retains the richness of life without their distinctions. But some of the contents of the spiritual life e.g. beauty, holiness are intimate with our personal life. It is difficult to see how they could have a place in the super-personal Absolute and be felt in intuition which is rather the sense of the whole. In this respect the Chaitanya School in Vaisnavism shows better insight, in as much as they emphasise the personal spiritual experiences at times transcended in the depth of spiritual life when the sense of personality is temporarily dropped, if not completely suspended.

Bradley sees the dignity of the super-personal and the richness of the personal experiences in spiritual life and retains both of them as equally true experiences, but his emphasis upon non-rational nature of the spiritual life obliges him to go beyond the personal content and to get hold of the Absolute form. But his form does not suit its content. They cannot be successfully equated.

In spiritual life there is room for both these kinds of experiences—but they cannot be squared or integrated for they refer to the different poles of our conscious life. Hence Bhasker and Bosanquet has to accept a kind of impersonal-personal existence as the highest philosophic reality and the greatest spiritual realisation. And this is the natural conclusion which vouchsafes a transcendent as well as a personal spiritual felicity. This is a right conclusion where the subjectivity of the subject is retained along with the transcendent super-subjective existence, which, because it is absolute, has no concentration or subjectivity. The apparent difficulty of this position can be easily removed if the subject is felt as transcending all functioning. The dynamic functioning of the spirit may have immediacy of experience, but have no immediacy of simple awareness or apprehension. This is true immediacy, in which the subject is no longer perceived as a logical subject but as percipience.

The logical construction follows the synthetic unity of perception. But this percipience presents the true essence of transcendence and our freedom from all construction. The construction of the subject is presented along with the percipience and hence many have attempted a synthesis of the two. But the philosophic boldness demands the transcendence of the logical construction and to grasp the intuitive percipience which leaves the subject as freedom.

There is an element of truth in conceiving the highest existence as both comprehensive as well as free, but this is the

highest truth that intellect can conceive, for it retains the idea of transcendent freedom together with the elasticity of spiritual life, and this, perhaps, has been the source of maintaining the highest existence as competent to answer the demands of our religious life yielding all transparent joys of the soul as well as to satisfy the philosophic instinct of freedom.

The subject functions in time, without having its being in time. Its subjectivity which is essentially a functioning cannot be independent of time, though its nature and being as percipience and witness is quite independent of time. This clear distinction is necessary before we can speak of the self as freedom. True freedom is this time-transcendence, for all concentration and functioning is synchronous with time. Kant could not discover this freedom for his synthetic unity of apperception is essentially a functioning principle through time.

The self has a creative as well as a basic freedom. The Vedanta is the only philosophy which recognises this in proper sense. The self is free in a double sense, it is free as creative, it is free as percipience. The creative freedom sets it in dynamical reference and functioning, but its freedom as percipience introduces its transcendence and complete detachment from concentration and dynamism. The former makes it all comprehensive and the latter free. The advantage of this conception lies in presenting the elasticity of our life and the transcendence of our being; religion demands the former, philosophy the latter. True religious spirit lies in enjoying the free creative spirit, and the harmony and the comprehensiveness of being—and this fulfils the Bergsonian, the Platonic and the Vaisnavic ideals—whereas the philosophic instinct is satisfied in realising that true freedom is freedom of being, for it transcends all concentration which creative spirit suggests. Religion is based upon this concentration

and in the full opening of being religion is realised as merely connected with definitive being.

This double function cannot long continue for the self soon forsakes the delight of fellowship with and responsive reaction to the cosmic life, the free urge of creative spirit and consciousness and in the calm of being is installed in transcendent freedom. Eckhart has characterised this as the Eternal now of spiritual life which offers a unique satisfaction in the freedom from the labyrinth of experience, moral, aesthetic and religious. A Philosopher's heaven is this freedom.

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# The Conception of Heaven

By

HUMAYUN KABIR.

*Calcutta University.*

The subject of our Symposium is the conception of real Heaven, but before proceeding to define my attitude towards the problem, I should first like to point out some of the presuppositions that are implied in the formulation of the question itself.

There is, first of all, the emphasis on conception, which suggests that heaven is something that may be intellectually grasped and interpreted in terms of universal meanings accessible to all rational beings. Heaven would in that case be an object of the cognitive consciousness, and, as such, share in the general characteristics, if any, which all cognitive objects exhibit. Knowledge involves a duality, for with the annihilation of the relation between the subject and the object, the phenomenon of knowledge also disappears. Also, this conceptual characterisation of heaven suggests that cognition or intellection is the sole, or at any rate, the fundamental property of the experiencing self, a position not so very dissimilar from that of Descartes, and we are all aware of the difficulties to which such a simplification of human nature invariably leads. In any case, we cannot equate the subject of experience with the cognitive consciousness as a self evident proposition that requires no discussion or proof, and if we do so, heaven becomes something which must for ever remain alien or 'other' to the consciousness.

The adjective 'real', which qualifies heaven in the title to our problem is another indication of this intellectualising tendency of philosophy. For we must remember that it is only



in the case of knowledge that the distinction between appearance and reality has any meaning. With regard to either feeling or volition, we may no doubt apply a qualifying adjective by way of metaphor, but we can, only at our own cost, forget that it is a metaphor and nothing more. An unreal will or an unreal feeling is therefore a contradiction in terms, and as for the object which may prompt action or evoke the feeling, the recognition of its objectivity is at the same time the introduction of the cognitive principle in its relationship to the subject of experience. If heaven be an object of feeling or of volition qualifying attributes like real or unreal have no application with regard to it. If, however, heaven be an object of our conception or contemplation, there must, somehow or other, be room for this distinction in our awareness of it, and this is presumably recognised in the adjective 'real' which is added to heaven in the formulation of our problem.

This intellectualist bias is perhaps natural or even inevitable in philosophy, but there is no denying that it is also the cause of much of its difficulties. When we set out to explain the whole of human nature in terms of the intellect alone, it is inevitable that the non-intellectual elements must either be suppressed or distorted, and the result must in any case lead to the falsification of our account. In any attempt to define our conception of heaven, we must bear in mind the fact of this basic distortion.

## II

This brings me to a discussion of Dr. Sarkar's views. I must speak with diffidence, for I am not sure if I have understood Dr. Sarkar aright, but it seems to me that his "Philosopher's heaven" is based on this fundamental error. It is, fortunately, not necessary for me to discuss his interpretation of Plato or Plotinus, Bradley or Bergson, but I may just notice in passing that the opening sentence of his paper, viz.

"The conception of Heaven originates in us out of the constant press from within to free consciousness from its limits," has an unmistakable Platonic ring. The temptation, of course, is to pause here, and ask Dr. Sarkar to elucidate his meaning, for it is not clear what he means by 'press from within', or by 'consciousness' and 'its limits.'

If I have understood Dr. Sarkar aright, and I must emphasise the "if", for many of his statements are mystical to the point of mistiness, his philosopher's heaven seems to be something like this. Activity or functioning means limitation, for it must be in time. Again, activity means particularity, for it has direction and object, and whatever has direction or object, must to that extent be limited and particular. Besides, the fact of their being an object or "other" to the activity is itself an admission of its finitude, for there can be no "other" to what is infinite. That is why Dr. Sarkar thinks that even creative activity of the highest type is not freedom. In his words, 'Creative harmony prevails when the initial effort has been successful to mould, formulate and assimilate the obstructing element -- But the spiritual life has a wider range and a better expression where it experiences no opposition, not even a self-imposed one, for here is spiritual expression, rather than creation *through a process of inversion*.'" From this it follows that consciousness is not here free, and therefore it cannot be regarded as the realisation or even the realising of the philosopher's heaven. On the other hand, there is the aspect of percipience or witness which characterises the being of the self, and this percipience or witness, because it is *of* time, is not *in* time. In the words of Dr. Sarkar, "The subject functions in time, without having its being in time", and true freedom lies in pure consciousness of this being through the transcendence of time. Hence, it is "in the freedom from the labyrinth of experience, moral, aesthetic and religious" that true freedom lies, and this

freedom is the philosophic heaven of Dr. Sarkar. In other words, quiescence, negation of all activity, the cessation of experience is the consummation towards which all must aim, for that alone is the heaven that can "free consciousness from its limits." Perhaps it can, and perhaps it will, but only by the extinction of consciousness itself.

I have already suggested that the intellectualist fallacy seems to be at the basis of Dr. Sarkar's conception of heaven. For it is in the cognitive consciousness alone that the distinction of subject and object is paramount, and the process of knowledge is but the unceasing effort to overcome that duality. In the volitional or emotional consciousness, so far as we can logically isolate such forms, this sense of duality is not prominent, and there is therefore no such urge to negate that opposition. The fact that the sense of duality and the necessity of transcending it govern Dr. Sarkar's conception of heaven is clear indication that his approach to the problem is from the side of the intellect alone. Otherwise, one cannot see any meaning in his denial of freedom to even the highest types of creative activity.

But emphasis on the intellect alone always leads to the nemesis of unintelligibility and mysticism. For, if the self is denuded of all its activities or functionings, and regarded as pure percipience or witness, one can describe it only in mystic and unintelligible terms. There may be the appeal to our self-consciousness, but the immediacy which is thus given in experience is never bare immediacy, it is always immediacy that reveals itself in the functionings of experience. In fact, I am inclined to think that we have here the familiar fallacy of the hypostatisation of the universal. It is true that the universal is not any one or even the totality of its particulars, but from that it does not follow that it has any being apart from that of its particulars, for the only being it has is in its particulars. The self also is not any one or even the

totality of its functionings, but from that it is perhaps equally risky to infer that the self has any being apart from the functionings in which it reveals itself.

There is also the problem of the relation of the functioning to its percipience, a problem that is incapable of solution for the simple reason that it is an unreal problem based upon the unreal, and perhaps impossible separation of the two. But I do not propose to dilate on this point, for if it be true that percipience or witness as a distinct entity is a mere logical fiction, all questions of its relation to its functionings become meaningless.

In fine, the whole of this tendency of trying to find an Absolute that is beyond time and beyond change, that is quiescent and negates all activity, seems to me to rest on the confusion of logical implicates with distinct existents. Because activity, as controlled and directional, is limited, it is assumed that cessation of activity is free from limitations and therefore infinite. No attempt is, however, made to define the status of finite and infinite, for it may well be that though they are logical implicates, they are not ( and perhaps cannot be ) distinct entities with distinct natures of their own. The relation between freedom and control is in like case, for it does not by any means follow that because they are logically opposed, they must also be opposed in their being. But the tendency is most noticeable in the attempted distinction between the subject as functioning and the subject as percipience or witness. Functioning has percipience as its logical implicate, but it is surely a misrepresentation of the logical relation to deduce from it the reality of the subject as freedom, who is distinct from and out of relation with the subject's activities. Similarly, transcendence of time is only the ideal limit to our experience of functioning in time, and precisely because it is such a limit, it can have no reality apart from the fact of time-consciousness.

## III

It only remains to indicate briefly the idea of heaven implicit in the criticisms made above.

Firstly, heaven cannot be the negative freedom in which all activities cease, for with the cessation of the activities, the reality of the self itself becomes a dubious fact. If consciousness is extinguished, what we get is not freedom but annihilation, and it seems philosophic suicide to attempt to identify the two. Heaven therefore means, not freedom from the labyrinth of experience and the cessation of all activity, but that particular organisation of the different activities and aspects of human nature in which all have the freest possible play. The concept of possibility is important here, for absolute freedom is also the hypostatisation of an unreal like absolute infinitude. Both are limiting concepts, or what we may call Ideas following Kant, and there is no justification for forgetting the lessons of the Critical philosophy. Herein also, we find the meaning of Bradley's insistence that, "every flame of passion, chaste or carnal, would still burn in the Absolute unquenched and unabridged, a note absorbed in the harmony of its higher bliss."

There may be some difficulty in this idea of organisation of the human faculties, but philosophers, in the West as well as in the East, have insisted on the reality of community. "Community is more than an aggregate of individuals, it is an enfolding spirit." If this be true, there is no difficulty in the idea of organisation, for admittedly, the unity of the different faculties of the individual is easier to realise than the unity of a group of individuals. In fact, many people doubt whether such community is at all attainable in the case of a group, but perhaps no one doubts its possibility in the case of the individual. Every moment of his waking life of thought and action attests to the reality of such community or organisation.

Finally, it has to be insisted once again that heaven, whatever it may imply, cannot be defined in purely conceptual terms. It must provide room for all the faculties of the individual, and because man is essentially a social being, it must also minister to the needs of his social or communal life. The failure to realise this leads to the contradictions in our conception of heaven, but if we start with an explicit recognition of the inadequacy of the intellect to the demands of the real, the very possibility of misunderstanding is thereby overcome.

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# What is my Real Heaven ?

By

Dr. MIR VALI UDDIN.

*Osmania University.*

I have been asked by the Executive Committee of this Congress to take part in a symposium on the above subject and to make a statement of my personal faith on this matter. In the very nature of the case, there can be only an expression of our personal belief. As regards theoretical evidence for the existence of Heaven or even argument for its probability, I therefore come forward empty-handed. I do not regret that this is the case. For I hold that even "in default of knowledge belief is sometimes justified by the insistence or depth of the need which it satisfies." And who amongst us does not desire to go to real Heaven after he has passed the short and weary days of his life in the futile search of a false earthly one ?

What is my idea of *real Heaven* ? This may be developed by a contrast of the life that we are condemned to live here in this our own world. Constituted as we are, we always strive—for striving is our sole nature—and no attained *goal* can put an end to our striving. The basis of all striving is willing, is need, deficiency and thus pain. If on the other hand we lack objects of desire, because we are deprived of them by a too easy satisfaction, a terrible void and ennui comes over us and our being and existence itself becomes an unbearable burden. Thus as Schopenhauer puts it 'Our life swings like a pendulum backwards and forwards between pain and ennui.'

Now, Heaven according to the Holy Quran, is a place where there is neither pain nor ennui. It is an abode of eternal happiness—where there is eternal life and no death. where there is eternal joy and no grief, where there is eternal

peace and bliss and no ennui. This idea of *eternal* peace is expressed in the Quran in no less than sixteen places, e. g.

"Give good news to the believers who do good that they shall have a goodly reward, staying in it (Heaven) *for ever*." (XVIII, 23).

"As to those who are made happy, they shall be in the Garden abiding in it as long as the Heaven and the earth endure, except as your Lord please : a gift which shall *never be cut off*. And whoever believes in Allah and does good deeds He will cause him to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide therein *for ever* ; Allah have indeed given him a goodly sustenance" (LXVII)

The believers whose permanent abode is Heaven have nothing to fear and nothing to worry. So it is repeated oft and on in the Holy Quran that :

"They shall have no fear nor shall they grieve" Thus the Righteous shall say :

"All praise is due to Allah, who has made grief depart from us, most surely our Lord is forgiving, Multiplier of reward, Who has made us alight in a house abiding for ever out of His Grace ; toil shall not touch us therein, nor shall fatigue therein affect us." (XXXV)

Envy is natural to man and still as we all know it is at once a vice and a great source of misery. Because men feel themselves unhappy, they cannot endure the sight of one whom they imagine happy. But in Heaven an entire change will come over the nature of man and there shall be no unhappiness, no rancour, no envy left in him. There shall be pure love and brotherly affection : Says the Holy Quran :—

"And We will remove whatever of ill-feeling is in their breasts" (VII, 43)

"We will root out whatever of rancour is in their breasts (They shall be) as brethren on raised couches face to face" (XV, 47).



In Heaven there shall be nothing but the 'Mercy' of God — unceasing, ever increasing, all-embracing Mercy.

"Their Lord gives them good news of Mercy from Himself (His) good pleasure and gardens, wherein *lasting blessings* shall be theirs. (IX, 21)

Heaven is an abode of *Light*, where there shall be no darkness of any kind. The faces of the Righteous will be shining like the stars, like the moon—glorious and resplendent. Says the Holy Quran :—

"On that day you will see the faithful men and the faithful women—their light running before them and on their right hand—good news for you today. Gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide therein, that is the grand achievement." (LVII, 12).

The greatest of all happiness that will be the lot of the Believers will be the *goodly pleasure of the Lord*, for there, the Lord will be "well pleased with them" and they will be "well pleased" with Him. This is really the supremest happiness that can be conceived of—the pleasure of the Beloved Master whom they served throughout their life. Their deeds are approved and their highest reward is the expression of His satisfaction in which they find their gratitude, their happiness and their delight.

At the time of the death of the Believer, this is the happy message of the Lord that will be given to him :

"O soul thou art at rest ! Return to thy Lord well pleased (with Him) well pleasing (Him), so enter among My servants, and enter into My garden. (LXXXIX, 27-30).

In Heaven the occupation of the Believers will be to glorify the Divine Being and sing His praise which will fill them with divine bliss and happiness ! Says the Holy Quran :

"Their cry in it shall be : Glory to Thee,

O Allah ! and their greeting in it shall be :

Peace ; and the last of their cry shall be :  
Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds."

(X, 10)

"They shall not hear therein vain or sinful discourse, except the word 'Peace, Peace.' Thus perfect peace, tranquility and 'ataraxia' that was the summum bonum in our earthly life would be attained in its highest perfection. The same idea is depicted in more picturesque language in another passage in the Holy Quran, thus :

"And those who are careful of (their duty to) their Lord shall be conveyed to the garden in companies, until when they come to it and its doors shall be opened, and the keeper of it shall say to them, *Peace be on you, You shall be happy*, therefore enter it to abide. And they shall say : All praise is due to Allah, Who has made good to us His promise, and He has made us inherit the land : we may abide in the garden when we please ! So goodly is the reward of the workers. And you shall see the angels going round about the Throne glorifying the praise of their Lord : and judgment shall be given between them with justice, and it shall be said : All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds," (XXXIX, 73, 74, 75).

Lastly, the highest bliss of all that the Righteous will enjoy in Heaven will be the *Sight of the Lord*.

"(Some) faces on that day shall be bright looking to their Lord." (LXXV, 22, 23)

The sight of the Lord does not imply that the Lord will have a body. It is not with the material eye that He will be seen, but by the spiritual eye which the Righteous will possess in Heaven. Thus the truth will be unveiled and the vision of this Truth—the Ultimate Reality will be granted to us in full.

Such is the Muslim Paradise ! An eternal abode of Mercy, Peace, Light, Goodly pleasure of the Lord, and the beatific

vision of the souls in the presence of the Almighty, "When the veil which divides man from His Creator will be rent and heavenly glory revealed to the mind untrammelled by its corporeal, earthly habiliments." "The most favoured of God" said Mohammed "will be he who shall see the Lord's face (glory) night and morning, a felicity which will surpass all the pleasure of the body, as the ocean surpasses a drop of sweat." (Hadeez, quoted by Amir Ali in his *Spirit of Islam*, page 199).

In conclusion it is necessary to add a word here to remove a misconception which is very common. It will be readily conceived that the Prophet of Islam was addressing himself, not to the advanced minds of some idealistic philosophers, who happened to be then living but to the entire world engrossed in the crassest materialism and the coarsest polytheism. In order to make his meaning intelligible he had to adapt himself to the comprehension of all his contemporaries. It is just possible that the description of Heaven in the terms of "gardens below which rivers flow, etc., etc." was given to make it comprehensible to the limited intellects of the Arabs. This conjecture receives ample support from the authentic saying of the Prophet and the Holy Quran itself. One day talking to his friend Abu Huraira, the Prophet said, "God hath prepared for His good people what no eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of any one" and then recited the following verse of the Holy Quran :

"No soul knoweth the joy which is sincerely prepared for it as a reward for that it may have wrought." (XXXII) \*

These joys and blessings are hidden from the physical eye of the man and therefore its description in words—like trees, rivers and beautiful mansions with fairy attendants—can in the very nature of the case be only metaphorical. Words

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\*Hadeez quoted by Amir Ali in his *Spirit of Islam*

cannot reveal to us the real nature of these blessings which no eye hath seen, no ear hath heard. The parabolical nature of the Quranic expression is also plainly stated in the Holy Quran itself.

"It is He Who hath revealed the Book to thee. Some of its verses are firm (i. e. perspicuous or clear to understand) —these are the basis (or fundamental part) of the Book—and others are figurative." (III, 6).

Thus interpreted the Holy Quran affords us the purset and the sublimest idea of Heaven which will be the abode of the Righteous and the Just after death.

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# What is Real Heaven ?

By

Dr. R. VAIDYANATHASWAMI.

## Introduction.

In popular usage Heaven and Hell are supposed to refer to post mortem states of existence of the soul and are thought of as located far away in space. Since Death is a universal phenomenon, this view has the advantage of exhibiting Heaven as part of the routine round of life-experience. There are however great difficulties in the way of treating Heaven from this point of view. It is true that spiritualism and modern psychic research point unequivocally towards survival and to the fact that souls after death may be in different states or levels of consciousness. However, their data have not yet attained sufficient clarity and systematisation, to warrant any useful discussion of post-mortem states. There are other reasons as well why we should steer clear of spiritualism in this question. The concept of Heaven obtains its essential significance only when considered as an ideal to be sought after, realised and established as the normal form of our experience, by yogic discipline. Herein lies the true meaning of Heaven ; it is a popular degradation of the true concept to look on Heaven as a spoke in the inexorable wheel of life and death to which humanity is chained. Even though Heaven is primarily a conscious experience established in the physical body, it is possible in yoga to undergo discarnate experiences (i. e. experiences in which the link with the physical body is infinitesimal) and thereby arrive at direct knowledge concerning post-mortem states. From this it could be asserted that Heaven *may* be a condition experienced after death. If however the description of Heaven set forth in this paper has any

truth, one can be positive that the beings manifested in spiritualistic and psychic research experiments do not belong to Heaven but to the lower worlds. We may recall in this connection the statement of the Upaniṣad that at death two paths may be followed—the path of the Sun and the path of the Moon (—the path of Vijñāna and the path of Mind) and that the latter leads to return and re-birth. That Heaven—except possibly in rare cases—is not a form of post-mortem experience is an imperative reason for not basing our discussion on spiritualistic evidences.

The only other foundation to base our discussion of Heaven upon must be sought in the ancient religio-philosophic literatures and the spiritual traditions of the world wherein will be found evidences not only of various aspects of that higher experience which is indicated by 'Heaven', but also of the possibility of building it up into our normal conscious functioning. Speaking generally there are serious difficulties in the way of the right interpretation and right understanding of such ancient literatures, which are erected on a world-view which differs implicitly in fundamentals from, and is opposed on cardinal issues to, the reigning world-view of today. But the critical appreciation and evaluation of divergent world-views is the central task of philosophy, so that the problem of the right approach to world-views fundamentally different from that of our Mother Age should not offer insuperable difficulties to the professional philosophers. Further special facilities for the reconstruction of by-gone culture are offered in India, where the cultural chain starting from the Veda and continuing itself in the Upaniṣads, the various Sastras and the Puranas, has had a continuous stretch with relatively insignificant gaps, and where therefore there are evidences and concealed clues at every turn for the sharp eyed to pick up. In the present essay, we rely mainly on the material derived from Hindu culture ; this is much less of a limitation than might

appear at first sight as there is a fundamental parallelism in the general outlook and in the leading concepts of all ancient spiritual cultures—which indeed must be the case, if their doctrines are founded in objective truth.

### The Loka-Concept.

Behind the question of heaven as an actual state of experience to be aspired to by the conscious being, there lies the notion of Loka or 'World of experience.' We may state at once that a profound chasm is created between the ancient and modern world-outlook by the lack in the latter of Loka-jñāna, the intuition of differently organised worlds of experience. The loka-concept pre-supposes a penetrating analysis into the elements which go to make up normal or waking consciousness, and implies that the world of everyday life is a construction which has been put together and arranged and that it can be dissolved and made to give place to other distinct world-forms. This idea is expressed in various common words like *Sthiti*, firm upholding, *Laya*, dissolving, *Lokasaṅgraha*, the holding together of the world; the Veda speaks of a presiding deva, the Vaiśvānara, whose function is to uphold the waking consciousness. The modern prejudice would be in favour of the world of waking consciousness as the final standard of reference and value and of dismissing its disturbances with more or less scant attention as temporary subjective aberrations. But the sole standard in evaluating a world form must be in reference to its inner coherence and stability and its relatedness to other world-forms; every world form in which these are assured must be accepted as supremely significant and valuable, both from the practical and the philosophic standpoint.

We may, as is often done in Indian Philosophies, stress the parallelism between objective forms and subjective powers and functions, and explain the diversity of possible world-forms by referring it to possible diversities in the

functioning of the knowledge-action-mechanism, and in the range and direction of its interests. This explanation is certainly helpful in giving us a rough idea of 'objectivity' in its relation to our fundamental activities and interests; but it does not go very deep. An *a priori* attempt at explaining world-forms even if successful, would be far less profitable than the understanding of the concrete world-forms which have been experienced and recorded.

### The Vedic Classification of Worlds.

In the Veda we have an unequivocal statement of the diversity of worlds and a broad classification of them. The earlier classification is into three worlds, Bhūḥ, Bhuvaḥ, Svaḥ or earth, intermediate world and heaven, or the gross, the subtle and the causal worlds. In conformity with the main spirit of Vedic thought, these would respectively refer to the normal material human consciousness with its overtones of life and mind, an intermediate world of flux and change through which the aspirant passes in his upward progress, and a final stable world characterised by a vast access of knowledge and power, the Divyaloka, the divine world or Heaven, which is the goal of his effort. A finer and apparently later classification into seven worlds (Saptavyāhṛti) was given by another Ṛṣi; namely, Bhūḥ, Bhuvaḥ, Svaḥ, Mahāḥ, Janāḥ, Tapāḥ, Satyam. Here the lower world of earth-consciousness is subdivided into three, which are again named Bhūḥ, Bhuvaḥ, Svaḥ; the divine world is similarly sub-divided into three, Janāḥ, Tapāḥ, Satyam, while the intermediate world is named Mahāḥ. The idea of lokas has been taken up from the Vedas by the other Śāstras and the Purāṇas and we meet in later disciplines enumerations of more or less than seven lokas. In general it is quite easy to trace the correspondence between these enumerations and the Vedic classification. The Vedic lokas must therefore be considered fundamental, and our



first task is to understand the basis on which they have been classified.

The interest which has dictated the Vedic classification is the profound dissatisfaction with the life-situation, *Samsāra*, and the effort to call down and establish an intuited mode of higher conscious functioning. Powerlessness, ignorance, feverish restlessness and the craving of unsatisfied desire are the ingredients of the lower world of bondage, *Samsāra*. The terrible phenomenon so characteristic of the lower world is *death*; for man comes he knows not whence and he goes he knows not whither. And this death is symptomatic of the feebleness of the light of consciousness in the lower world, of the vast lacunæ which it leaves untouched; it is indeed not a light but a glow-worm gleam which can at best shew up the darkness around. The Vedic stress is accordingly on the difference between the lower world of death and the higher world of immortality, *Amṛtaloka*, where man may indeed shed the body, but does not die, nor is born, since there is no gap in his conscious function. Again the lower world is one of bondage and misery where one feels himself in the grip of Karma or of an inexorable Fate, where the self is continually foiled and the consciousness fails continually to realise its own fundamental implications.—a world of *Asat*, a negative world characterised by negations, limitations, and contradictions. The divine world,\* on the other hand, is *Sat* and *Sanātana*, positive and eternal, and the Self there is released from all bondage and misery, and realises in experience the bliss and supremacy belonging to its nature. The negative and limiting features of the lower world are generally described in the Veda and Upaniṣads as belonging to the nature of 'mind' (a world intended to symbolise a precise concept) or the 'mental mode

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\* Heaven is also referred to in this essay as *the divine world*, *the higher world*, the worlds of Vijnāna etc.

of consciousness'. 'Mind' as used here includes thought, judgment, reasoning and all mental functions usually so called ; it must be generally understood as including every experience which falls short of the perfected and purified modes of consciousness whose attainment and establishment in the human organism constitute 'heaven' or 'the divine world.' In conformity with this, '*Brahman*' the vast Reality which is the content of experience in the higher world is spoken of as being beyond the mind and unreachably by it. In opposition to mind, the mode of conscious function in the higher world is termed '*Vijñāna*'—which has been translated into 'supermind' in the writings of Sri Aurobindo.

The intermediate world—the world of transition from mind to supermind has been named the 'Mahaḥ'. The transition involves a thorough-going transformation of the inner being and the outward personality and as is well-known in Yogic tradition and practice, is generally accompanied by acute stress and suffering which are indications of the difficulty in subduing and readjusting the functional habits of the *Antah-karaṇas* to the modes of consciousness of the higher world. The stress of transformation might be somewhat mitigated in proportion to the spiritual and moral fire of the aspirant and the discipline and plasticity of his inner instruments ; but the pain and suffering are unavoidable as the transformation is a thorough overhauling of the entire apparatus and an initiation and establishment of entirely new modes of response and function. The name 'Mahaḥ' describes the new quality of experience which emerges here for the first time, and which continues to be the basis and background of experience in all the higher worlds—namely, 'Vastness'. The 'cosmic consciousness' referred to by Buck in his book is a partial and incomplete description of the entry into 'Mahaḥ'. The 'vastness' here does not refer to the increased powers of the senses (karmendriyas and jñānendriyas), annihilating distances

and time-intervals, which are manifested in clairvoyance, clairaudience, and in being at any place instantaneously. If we are to believe the evidences of psychic research, such powers are manifested by the spirits which appear at seances ; but what we are to note here is that these spirits have not got rid of *Āṇava* (which is the true contradictory of *Mahāh*), the feeling of occupying a limited portion of space at any given instant. This release of the power of the senses can be effected by Yoga within the lower world itself. What the 'vastness' of *Mahāh* refers to is therefore firstly the awareness of the large-scale movements of Nature against the vast background of the Unmanifest and secondly the disappearance of the *Āṇava*. So long as the *Āṇava* has not disappeared we are still in the region of mind, even though there may be awareness of the Vast as object. The violent rush of the senses to their distant object implies the state of *Āṇava*.

The later elaboration of this classification into seven worlds was no doubt motivated by the need for a more detailed analysis and must have also served the purpose of checking the popular error that any kind of *siddhi* (e. g. clairvoyance, clairaudience, thought-reading, knowledge of past and future) amounted to release from the lower world of *Saṃsāra* and entry into the divine world. In the elaborate classification, the lower and the higher worlds are each sub-divided into three. The subdivisions *Bhūh*, *Bhuvah*, *Svah*, of the lower world correspond roughly to Matter, Life and Mind, or more precisely to the levels of consciousness of the plant, the animal and man. In later *Sāstras* and *Purāṇas*, these have been replaced by the three *guṇas*, *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Satva*, and the Vedic description of *Brahman manovācāmagocaram* has been correspondingly replaced by *Nirguṇa-Niśtraiguṇya*. The significance of the triple classification of the lower world will perhaps be best understood by interpreting it in terms of the Theory of Evolution. According to this theory, inorganic

matter contains incalculable potentialities and by re arrangements and combinations of its ultimate elements (electrons, protons, neutrons, etc.) can manifest the phenomena of life and consciousness, and evolve all the known forms of life through the fixation of favourable variations by selection and heredity. The first wide gap in the evolutionary chain is the as yet unbridged one between the protoplasm and non-living matter. The animal kingdom branches off from the vegetable at the level of very lowly organisms. Through fishes, reptiles, birds, mammals, apes and a (second) missing link, man has arrived. As the latest product of the evolutionary chain, man is in a sense the epitome of all that has preceded, and contains in himself implicitly the tendencies and functions which are established in other life-forms. The spiritual aspiration of man to resolve the inner conflicts of his being, and attain to a balanced harmony of knowledge, function and enjoyment, is at the same time a biological aspiration to evolve a new organism, fitted to cope with, and resolve the miseries inherent in, the situation created by the emergence of the Reason and the intellect. Such biological evolution can happen only through the preparedness and active co-operation of the Reason and Intellect ; in other words, it is necessary that man should take stock of his own structure and the inherited tendencies and layers of his being, and intuit the new tendencies and functionings which are to be established in the organism. Now the structure of the nervous apparatus of man is a general index of his conscious and sub-conscious, psychic and vital functioning. In comparative psycho-physiology it is recognised that the human nervous system may be divided into three main divisions or successive layers, each of which is an evolutionary superimposition on the previous, namely the autonomic (Sympathetic and para sympathetic), the spino-thalamic, and the cerebral. The first of these controls the ultimate molecular processes of

the organism and its vegetative functions, namely the absorption and biochemical transformation of food material by glands, excretion, secretion, respiration and circulation. The second corresponds roughly to the animal consciousness and marks the development from lower invertebrate to higher vertebrate forms of life. Its main function is movement, with high development of the senses which guide and control movement. The last or cerebral system corresponds to the perfecting of the spatial senses and the development of delicate and differentiated perception, exercises general control and co ordination of the previous systems and marks the distinctively human level of speech and abstract thought. That these levels should be distinguished as distinct may be seen from various sides. Thus it is known that peristalsis in the alimentary canal cannot be initiated by an effort of will (as all sufferers from constipation would know to their cost), though it can be intensified or weakened by the will when it is already present. In fact the autonomic system has a rhythm of its own, and lives its own life in the dark depths of the conscious being in relative independence of the two other divisions of the nervous system, to which it furnishes the support. The cerebral and the spino-thalamic levels correspond to the conscious and unconscious self of Freud and their distinctness is the whole basis of psycho analytic theory. From a comparison of the results of this modern analysis with the ancient classification, it is not possible to entertain any doubt that the three lower worlds of the Veda (or the three parallel guṇas of Sāṅkhyān Prakṛti) refer to the vegetable, animal, and human levels of consciousness implicit in man. In the ordinary human being these divisions of the nervous system not only indicate the corresponding levels in the organised consciousness, but seem to express them exhaustively as well ; in other words, normal human consciousness seems to be involved in nervous material to such an

extent that it may be considered a merely incidental result of nervous function—the spino-thalamic and the cerebral nervous systems appearing as simply off shoots or over-tones of the autonomic. Indeed the cortical cell which executes the highest conscious functions has to be fed and sustained by the autonomic system, and any injury or failure of its nutrition may result in serious damage to the whole consciousness. That this view would be an error is shown conclusively by the Yogic experience, where by suitable energisation the corresponding levels of consciousness can be made to function far beyond the limits of the nervous mechanism ; thus the nervous system is apparently the *support*, but certainly not the *cause* of the conscious function.

Thus to sum up, we may say that from the point of view of normal human consciousness, it is right and proper that the lower world should be counted as only one as in the earlier Vedic classification ; for here the worlds of life and mind have got so completely involved in matter, that it is possible to consider them as mere overtones of the material or vegetable consciousness. But from the point of view of yogic experience the lower world should count as three ; for here the beings behind the cerebral and spino-thalamic organisations are energised and released from their entanglement and are recognised to be distinct and to function and experience in distinct worlds.

### **The Higher or Divine World.**

The description of the divine world may be approached from two sides which would serve as mutual checks ; firstly from the more or less broad references to it which may be gathered from Vedas, Upaniṣads, Śāstras and Purāṇas. Secondly as confirmation or check thereof, we may observe that if this higher world is to have biological significance and reality, it must have been prefigured in the ideals and

aspirations of the race, its specific quality and form must have been felt more or less clearly in the main directions on which human effort has been concentrated—in Bhakti, in Yoga, in asceticism, in Philosophy, in ethical striving, in Art, in heroic achievement etc. If, of course, one knows individuals in whom some or all the elements which go to make up the divine world have been realised or established, that fact will put the seal of certainty on the description.

The broad features of the higher world have been already referred to ; namely, whereas experience at the ordinary level is characterised by feverish desire and restlessness and the tossing of the heart from side to side, by a lack of sense of basis (Nārāyaṇa), by dense ignorance and mental inertia, by the poverty of memory and the feebleness of the senses and the intellect, by greed, disgust, hate, fear, and suffering, and by general limitation in scope of all our powers and functions (Kīñcittva), these limitations are removed in the higher world where experience manifests Saccidānanda and is founded in Mahat or Brahman, the Vast.

But this description is not likely to carry home as it is in terms of vague generalities. In order that it may have intimate appeal, it must be stated in reference to self-consciousness which marks the specific advance of man over the animal, and which is the latest and most precious jewel which has been churned out from the ocean of the Unmanifest. The structure of the human consciousness, and all the peculiar features of human situation are in intimate relation with the centrifugal activity of the 'I'. The 'I' in man is the magical word of power, and must be thought of as a Bindu of inexhaustible potentiality, the appeal to which continually sustains and energises the inert psycho-physical mechanism, and draws down a continuity of selective memory, increased enjoyment, interest and power. All human aspiration is bound up with the 'I'; and the inner contradiction in man's being which

results in the miseries of *Samsāra* may be traced to the fact that the implications of the 'I'—namely, absolute autonomous being, supremacy and bliss—are continually knocked down and trampled under foot in its experience through and identification with the body.

To understand the general role of the 'I' in the knowledge-process in normal consciousness, we observe that here through attachment to the physical body, the 'I' is either identified with the body or conceived as a sort of substance or monad lodged therein, and is not recognised for what it is in very truth, namely an individuating movement of consciousness. The 'I' as an object of knowledge is fundamentally different from any other object which is known in normal consciousness; for the knowledge of the object 'I' is an intimate inward knowledge, the knowledge of a being which is absolutely unique, which exists in its own right, holding within itself the past as memory and the future as purpose, and which is not only absolutely precious, but is the sole standard and measuring-rod of all values. The knowledge of any other object is never of this inward kind but superficial; that is, it is not knowledge of the object as an individual being, but knowledge of *nāma* and *rūpa*—the co-present universals and the external relatedness. The knowledge of the object is *Jñāna*—knowledge by *namarūpa*; the knowledge of the 'I' is *Vijñāna* (*Vīśeṣasya Jñānam*) knowledge of the unique particular, or the individual being. On account of this difference the subject and object enter into the perception of normal consciousness with quite different status and value, the former entering as the autonomous and conscious Lord, knower and enjoyer, the latter as the inert chattel which is possessed and enjoyed. As the object enters only through its universal and external relations, sameness or identity with itself could not be asserted in regard to it—in other words it has no being; objective Time is therefore momentary and discrete and has to be distinguished



from subjective time or duration. The world of normal consciousness is the evolute of this form of perception. The weightage of the scales here in favour of the subject naturally continues in one's relations to other human beings, even though here one is mediately aware through a complicated inference that one has to do with other selves. The resulting social maladjustment, and the failure to enter into right relation with one's fellows constitute, no doubt, principal ingredients of the misery of *Samsāra*. The vision of the world of human beings which is presented in this level of consciousness is not very far from the vision which is at the root of the behaviouristic theory ; it is the vision of innumerable solid masses of protoplasm, which for strange and mysterious reasons, contort themselves, gesticulate wildly and execute complicated movements, and which must be carefully watched inasmuch as they are subject to sudden and explosive transformations. The behaviourist theory gives us the comforting assurance that not only the normal movements but also the dangerous aberrations and the tempestuous transformations are subject to Law, and can be predicted and provided against.

The role of the 'I' in yogic samādhi is different. When concentration on an object is increased in intensity, a point is reached at which there is unconsciousness of one's own body, and the I sense is projected into the object, so that the object is now felt as the body of the 'I'. This phenomenon of Samādhi is possible precisely because the 'I' is not a monad, but an individuating movement of consciousness which could be initiated anew in different supports. In Samādhi, then, the individuating movement is annulled in its original ādhāra—namely one's own body—and through the focussing of the mind on the object is recreated there and superimposed in some mysterious manner on the individuating movement or 'causal stress' which is the essence of the object, with the

result that the object is presented in the form 'I' and known in that inward and intimate way in which the 'I' is known. Since this Samādhi experience is the inevitable culmination of intense concentration, we have here a proof of the important fact that *an object can be known as unique individual being, if and only if it is presented in the form 'I'*. In other words, the 'I' is the universal form of individual being. We may conclude that the new I-movement created in the object is *different* from the original and temporarily cancelled I-movement of the yogin, for two reasons; (1) during the samādhi there is no consciousness of the body or memory of experiences in the body: in fact the appearance of such memory is the signal for the return to normal consciousness, and (2) after return to normal consciousness there is no complete and coherent memory of the Samādhi experience, but there is a feeling of increased familiarity with the object and right knowledge relating to it is presented to the conscious mind from *subconscious memory*. Though Samādhi is an advanced power and opens the gates to the full exploitation and enjoyment of the world of mind, we see, that in respect of immediate knowledge, it does not carry us in fundamentals beyond the limitations of normal consciousness. For the *uncentricity* of the mind and the unequal status of subject and object remain, since the annulment of the original I-centre appears to be a *sine qua non* for the creation by Samādhi of the new centre in the object.

The form of perception in the higher world or world of Vijñāna is quite different. It is here for the first time that it becomes a matter of direct and immediate realisation that Caitanya or consciousness is the very stuff of which the entire world of experience is constructed, and the idea of the object as a passive and inert partner in the perceptual transaction becomes palpably false. In the Vijñāna form of perception the I' or the conscious percipient is simultaneously in the

subject and object and perception becomes a transaction between two individual beings each of which is presented both inwardly and outwardly, since each functions both as object and subject in relation to the other,—a love-play or *Līla* between two centres of fundamentally equal status. As has already been explained, this form of perception is not realised through *Samādhi*, which though an advanced power, still belongs to the lower world of separateness. The wide gap which separates *Samādhi* from *Vijñāna* has been sought to be bridged in Tibetan monasteries by the following practice which is still current ; the *sādhaka* performs *samādhi* on an object so that he *becomes* the object and is unconscious of his own body : while in this condition, that is to say, while stationed in the object, he tries to perceive as object the body he has left. Then he returns to his normal consciousness and again he repeats the *Samādhi* as before, trying to alternate the two conditions as rapidly as possible. If normal consciousness is regarded as the result of an act of *Samādhi* performed on one's own body, this practice would amount to the rapid alternation of *Samādhi* on the two centres engaged in the perceptual transaction. This practice pre-supposes advanced power of Yoga and may conceivably lead one on to *Vijñāna*. That *Vijñāna* is the form of perception in the higher worlds has been reported also by Swedenborg who in his description of heaven says that in heaven, every one though keeping his own identity is in a sense identical with every one else. This description of the form of perception in the higher world appears bizarre and full of contradictions to normal human mentality ; the records of Hindu culture however furnish ample evidence that it has been realised and established before and that it can be realised again. Apart from the strenuous methods of yoga, the practice of *Kṛṣṇa Bhakti* in particular, and *Bhakti* in general tends to culminate in *Vijñāna*, as the *Iṣṭa-devatā* becomes one with the *Ātman* in the heart of all human beings,

beyond a certain stage. The source of apparent contradictions of Vijñāna lies in the inability of the intellect to apprehend the basis of 'identity' and 'difference' and the nature of the 'I' in terms of its apparatus of hypostatized concepts and the principle of the excluded middle. This is the content of the common-place of the Upaniṣads, that 'the Reality is beyond the mind'.

### **The Atman in the Higher World.**

The question of the ultimate knower and of its relation to the 'I' which is a knotty point of debate in Indian Philosophy, is not a particularly urgent one in the ordinary mental level when the Ahankāra has made for itself a permanent lodging in an organism, nor even with the Yogin who can perform Samādhi on any object at will, but becomes really acute in the Vijñāna stage, where the self is ubiquitous and myriad-faced and plays with itself in the Līla which is experience. Is the Self one or many, is it aṇu or Vibhu? To such questions, the answer cannot be one-sided. Behind the lightning transformation of the self, its myriad dartings to and fro, there arises the background of the one calm Self, the Ancient and Self-born, whose nature is knowledge itself or pure Cit, which itself pure and Acyuta is the support and the continent of all experience. Distinguishable from the Ātman, though subsisting in and indissolubly linked with it, is the movement of individuation, of manifestation, which though not acit is subtly different from the Ātma-cit, and has accordingly been termed in the Tantra-Śāstras *Cidrūpinī*, of the form of Cit. The Ātman and the manifesting movement which is not separated from the Ātman are the ultimate forms arising in the analysis and explanation of immediate experience in the higher world. As Ātman the Self is one, and as individuating movement founded therein, it is many—and the many are linked up by the process which may be termed

indifferently knowledge or love. As Ātman the Self is the continent of all manifested experience and its categories, but as 'I' it is *aṇu*.

### **The Space-time-Cause Categories in the Higher World.**

In the lower consciousness, the Space-time form of the world is determined by and in reference to the need of preserving the physical body and establishing therein the powers of life and mind which have been already manifested or are in the process of manifestation. From the point of view of preserving the body, we are interested in the surfaces of other bodies and on the possibilities of movement. Hence the conception of space as a real entity occupied by bodies and as divisible and measurable. No satisfactory explanation is known of the three dimensionality of space. As explained already the object in the mental level is inert and the Time-process is conceived not as duration (that is, analogous to conscious process) but as a succession of discrete states without inner continuity, externally related by Natural Law or mechanical causation. There is a radical change in all this in the worlds of Vijñāna. Here the ultimate creative cause is the Will or the Divine Desire of the Ātman, and the act of Will is a seed cast into the Waters of Truth, which grows and manifests itself finally in the world of matter—that is, the world where Caitanya has restricted itself to habitual movements and cyclic recurrences. This creative manifesting movement is concrete Time pictured as the Divine Kālī dancing on the body of Śiva. The sustaining movement behind any individual universe has its own rhythm and its own self-figuration—Time and Space—which are the forms of knowledge of the individual Beings which participate and experience in that Universe. The Space and Time of modern science express the rhythm and the relations of matter, and are ultimate for any form of consciousness in whose mani-

festation and function, matter as we know it plays an essential part.

### **The Form of the Concept in the Higher World.**

In the realisation and establishment of Vijñāna, the mind and the intellect are not annulled, but the habits of thought and function are radically altered so as to conform to and apprehend the experience in the higher world. Thus the functions of conceptuation, reasoning and speech continue. The nature of the concept has been investigated by philosophers and has been characterised as the concrete universal. This description can continue to apply to concepts in the higher world, provided the concreteness and universality are properly understood. The concreteness lies in the fact that the concept is now a creative act of thought which manifests the being to which the concept refers. The concept is concrete because it is not merely knowledge but also Will—the will to sustain, create or destroy. The concept is not a class-name, but universal, because it refers to the essential being in the object not to the externalities of form. If we accept the findings on which Mantra Śāstra is based, the essential being or 'causal stress' which sustains an object has the form of Nāda-Bindu and is expressed in gross form by a sound, word or phrase—which is the *mantra* of the object. This mantra has causal efficacy, that is, it can create, sustain or destroy the object. Knowledge would thus consist in knowing the *mantras* or true concepts corresponding to various objects. The Veda is Mantra, i.e. the concepts expressed in Vedic words possess causal efficacy and universality of this kind. The Veda generally unites in a single concept objects of the most diverse kinds ; and the inference is that the same kind of 'causal stress' or ultimate force of being underlies the diverse objects so united. Thus the Sun and inner illumination of Vijñāna, the Moon and the mind, the physical fire

and force and economy of inner being are united in this way. Such unions indicate correspondences in essential being between objects of different worlds synthesised in our experience.

### **The Theory Reflection.**

The Higher Divine World is subdivided into three as is the lower world ; the Jano-loka where there is extreme sensitiveness to the thoughts and emotions of other beings, the Tapoloka or the world of all-conquering spiritual power, and Satyam the world of being where alone can be understood the ultimate basis and meaning of Truth. It will be noticed that there is some similarity between Jano-loka and Mind, Tapoloka and life or Prāṇa, and Satyaloka and earth or matter. It has been surmised from this that the three guṇas though impure and leading to bondage are in a mysterious way the reflections of the eternal and positive qualities respectively expressed in the three higher worlds, in Mahat or in the waters of illusion. On account of this idea it becomes possible to say that even the lower impure world of bondage is Brahman, even the separatist miserable 'I' of Saṃsāra is not different from the one blissful and autonomous Ātman. This idea of reflection has been enthusiastically taken up by Indian Philosophers and given wide application. The idea is unavoidable if we are to assert both the all-inclusiveness of Brahman and the removable element of Asat and impurity in the lower world. Thus the mighty calm and the unshakable Being of Satyam reflects as the darkness and the inertia of the material consciousness ; the urge of desire and greed ingrained in Prāṇa is the reflection of the grand power of Tapas in which thought directly realises itself as its own object. And the half-way knowledge and unicentricity of mind are the reflections of Vijñāna by which Self knows itself as both Subject and Object.













